Rebellion 1857

A Symposium

Edited by P.C. JOSHI

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Preface

The People's Publishing House decided to publish a Memorial Volume on the 1857 uprising as its contribution to the centenary celebration. Despite a very broad agreement about the national character of this century-old uprising among our patriotic intellectuals, it remains, unfortunately enough, one of the unresolved controversies of Indian history. This volume, therefore, is in the nature of a symposium and the views of each contributor are his own.

Talmiz Khaldun is an old research worker who has worked on the subject in the National Archives. Dr. K. M. Ashraf of the Delhi University has described the outlook and contribution of the Wahabis who were an organised influential group and represented the viewpoint of the older feudal intelligentsia. Benoy Ghose has outlined the background to the critical negative attitude of the Bengali intelligentsia, which represented the then new intelligentsia endowed with modern education. I have tried to deal with the controversies with which the 1857 uprising is shrouded. I am not a professional historian and had to resort to the old-fashioned method of speaking through lengthy quotations. If I annoy the modern stylist, my only defence is that I am supplying the younger readers with documentation from older books, etc., which are not easily available to them.

The 1857 heritage played a big part in giving a patriotic orientation to Indian national literature in our various languages. It has supplied the Indian writers with dramatic incidents of suffering, struggle and sacrifice and noble patriotic themes. In the literary section, Professor P. C.

Gupta of the Allahabad University has dealt with the impact of 1857 on the Hindi literature, and Professor Ehtesham Husain of the Lucknow University on the Urdu literature. Dr. K. M. Ashraf has contributed a paper on Ghalib. Gopal Haldar, Bengali literary critic and author, has dealt with contemporary Bengali literature.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the foreign scholars who have contributed valuable papers on the impact of 1857 in their own countries. Of special mention in this regard is James Bryne, the author of the paper on British reactions, whose sudden death has deprived us all of a keen, sympathetic and intelligent student of our history. These papers, results of painstaking research, reveal that in all these foreign lands the 1857 uprising was hailed as a national uprising of the Indian people for liberation from the British yoke and stirred feelings of solidarity in the democratic circles. We hope these foreign papers will help to write a hitherto unknown chapter in India's national history.

We thank our contributors who have made the publication of this Memorial Volume possible. Many other friends have contributed plenty of their labour of love before this volume could be got ready for the press. Our thanks to them all.

P. C. JOSHI

PART ONE

The Great Rebellion

TALMIZ KHALDUN

I. INTRODUCTION

THE INDIAN MUTINY[1] has been a popular subject with historians, both British and Indian. British historians have been inclined to dismiss it as a "sepoy mutiny"[2] that was "wholly unpatriotic and selfish....with no native leadership and no popular support."[3] Some Indian writers, on the other hand, have glorified it as a "War of Independence"[4] in which people rose *en masse*, gave no quarter to the Firinghis[5] and fought to the bitter end. While describing the British characterization as a result of imperial arrogance, it would be as well to bear in mind that the Indian interpretation is a product of uncritical nationalism. Both the views are extreme, and suspiciously convenient to their protagonists' interests.

The British view is too facile; it fails to explain how it was that "in the course of ten days English administration in Oudh vanished like a dream, and not left a wrack behind,"[6] nor why "at several places the populace rose before the sepoys at those stations mutinied."[7] Moreover, if it was a purely military insurrection, why was it deemed "necessary to punish the country people and citizens by fine and hanging for complicity in acts with which they of their own accord had nothing to do"[8] and why did Lord Canning always "judge much more harshly those of the civil population who had been led to acts of rebellion" than the rebellious sepoys ?[9] Why did the discovery of a plan to murder

all Europeans at Nagpur synchronize with mutiny at Aurangabad,[10] and why did "the revolt burst with the suddenness of an eastern tempest" and "in thousands of square miles overthrow and scatter to the winds the Company's administration which had seemed secure against any shock ?"[11]

How widespread the revolt was will become clear from the following descriptions given by the Reverend Alexander Duff, Charles Ball, and even Sir John William Kaye and Colonel G. B. Malleson, who otherwise termed it a "sepoy mutiny." According to Duff, "Never has the enemy been met without being routed, scattered, and his guns taken, but though constantly beaten he ever more rallies, and appears again ready for a fresh encounter. No sooner is one city taken or another relieved than some other one is threatened....No sooner is one district pronounced safe through the influx of British troops, than another is disturbed and convulsed. No sooner is a highway opened between places of importance, than it is again closed and all communications are for a year cut off. No sooner are the mutineers and rebels scoured out of one locality than they reappear, with double or treble forces, in another. No sooner does a mobile column force its way through hostile ranks, than they reoccupy the territory behind it. All gaps in the number of foes seem to be instantaneously filled up and no permanent clearance or impression appears anywhere to be made. The passage of our brave little armies through these swarming myriads instead of leaving deep traces of a mighty ploughshare through a roughened field seems more to resemble that of an eagle through the elastic air, or stately vessel through the unfurrowed ocean."[12] Another British historian, Charles Ball, describes the popularity of the revolt thus : "In Oudh, the rebels could march without commissariat, for the people would always feed them: They could leave their luggage without guard because the people would not attack it. They were always certain of their position and that of the British, for, the

people brought them hourly information. And no design could possibly be kept from them while secret sympathizers stood round every mess table and waited in almost every tent in the British Camp....No surprise could be effected except by a miracle, while rumours communicated from mouth outstripped even our cavalry."[13] Kaye admits that in the areas between the rivers Ganges and Jamuna "there was scarcely a man of either faith who was not arrayed against us."[14] Malleson also states that in four northern provinces—Oudh, Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand, and Saugar and Narbada—"the great bulk of the people rose against the British rule."[15] "Oudh has been," admitted the Reverend Cave-Browne, "the focus of a rebellion, deeper and more desperate, because it was essentially popular...."[16] Even in the Punjab, where no revolt took place, "the whole native community from the moneyed banker to the petty tradesman, from the government contractor to the common coolie stood aloof: no help, no supplies were forthcoming," till Delhi fell in the middle of September, 1857.[17] According to Thomas Lowe, "the infanticide Rajput, the bigoted Brahmin, the fanatic Mussalman, and the luxury-loving, fat paunched, ambitious Mahratta... had joined together in the cause; cow-killer, and the cow-worshipper, the pig-hater and the pig-eater, the crier of Allah is One and Muhammed is His Prophet and the mumbler of the mysteries of Brahm," had revolted conjointly.[18] "It is beyond doubt," writes R. C. Dutt, "that political reasons helped a mere mutiny of soldiers to spread among large classes of the people in Northern and Central India, and converted it into a political insurrection."[19] In short, the oft-voiced assertion of British historians that the rebellion of 1857 was no more than a "sepoy mutiny" is not quite the truth. In fact, within a few weeks of the breaking out of the rebellion British Empire in upper India had all but disappeared.[20]

But merely because the rebellion was up to then the biggest upsurge against the British would not lend it the character of a war of national independence. A clear re

futation of this assertion "lies in the fact that as soon as the mutinous troops and the rebellious chiefs were expelled from a district peace was immediately restored."[21] Besides, this view is also historically incorrect. There was no feeling of nationalism, as we know it today, extant among the Indian people then. This lack of "nationalism" was clearly reflected in the absence of a general plan for the rebellion or a central organization for the guidance of the rebels once the rebellion broke out. The campaigns of Bakht Khan, Nana Sahib, Tatya Tope, the Rani of Jhansi, Kunwar Singh and the Moulavi of Fyzabad were confined to narrow limits of their respective territories. There was also hardly any liaison between either the different rebel leaders or the centres of rebellion. On the contrary, the moment the visible vestiges of British rule seemed to disappear, conflicting regional and class loyalties of the rebel leaders as well as the masses came to the fore and, in consequence, weakened the anti-British united front.[22]

The extremist Indian view is also belied by the narrow geographical scope of the rebellion. It affected hardly one-sixth of the area of the country and less than one-tenth of its population. Not only that. The rebellion, shameful though it is to admit, could not have been suppressed without the active support of Indians themselves.[23]

To understand, therefore, the real nature of the rebellion, and to estimate its effects on subsequent Indian history—social, economic and political—it is essential that we investigate into the real causes, follow its course through blood and terror[24] and study the role played by various classes. Thus alone shall we rescue the story of the rebellion from the morass in which special pleading and interested accounts have pushed it.

II. THE CAUSES

The primary cause of the revolt was the imperialist exploitation of the Indian people. It would be well, there-

fore, to go back to the days of the founding of the East India Company. The stories of the fabulous profits being made by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French companies trading with India tempted British merchant-adventurers to form a trading company for a similar purpose. In 1600, the East India Company obtained a Charter from Queen Elizabeth I to trade with India and the Spice Islands. Trade with India in those years consisted of buying handicrafts and other valuable and artistic products from the country. As the Indian craftsmen were generally ignorant of the value of their goods in the international market, the wily and unscrupulous merchant-adventurers bought their goods for a mere trifle, and made huge profits. The dividends of the East India Company till 1765 varied from 100 to 250 per cent per annum.[25] This did not include the pickings of its individual agents and servants in India.[26] (The fact that even petty employees of the Company on their return to England could establish themselves as lords and were generally addressed as Nabobs indicates their tremendous illegal gains in this country.)

In 1765, the East India Company acquired the *Diwanee* of Bengal. By then, it had ousted all other European competitors from the Indian market. The acquisition of the *Diwanee* and the virtual monopoly of the trade with India further increased the profits of the Company and its servants, while adding heavily to the misery and privation of the people of India. Adam Smith has this to say about the *Diwanee* : "The Government of an exclusive company of merchants is perhaps the worst of all governments for any country whatever. No other sovereigns ever were or, from the nature of things, ever could be, so perfectly indifferent about the happiness or the misery of their subjects, the improvements or waste of their dominions, the glory or disgrace of their administration, as, from irresistible moral causes, the greater part of the proprietors of such a mercantile company are, and necessarily must be. It is a very singular government in which every member of the admi-

nistration wishes to get out of the country, and consequently to have done with the government as soon as he can and to whose interest the day after he has left it and carried his whole fortune with him, it is perfectly indifferent though the whole country was swallowed up by an earthquake."[27] According to William Bolts "while this (British) nation is gazing after the fruit, the Company and their substitutes are suffered to be rooting up the tree....The Company, if left to pursue its present system, will ruin itself; the possessions in Bengal will be beggared...."[28] Holmes remarks that "the native administrators oppressed the peasants and embezzled the revenue. The servants of the Company found it profitable to connive at the abuses...."[29]

The inevitable result of the accumulation in England of the wealth of plunder was that it became, along with similar other accumulations, the basis of capitalist enterprise in that country. Marx observes that "chartered companies were powerful instruments in promoting....concentration of wealth....the treasures obtained outside Europe by direct looting, enslavement and murder, flowed to the motherland (metropolitan country) in streams and were there turned into capital."[30] Brooks Adams, while agreeing with Marx, remarks cynically : "Had Watt lived fifty years earlier, he and his invention must have perished together," for lack of sufficient capital to set them working.[31]

Thus, while according to the terms of the original Charter, the East India Company was "not to exchange as far as possible the manufactured goods of England for the products of India but to carry the manufactures and commodities of India and Europe,"[32] acts of Parliament were passed in 1700 and 1721 absolutely prohibiting, with a few specified exceptions, "the employment of printed or dyed calicoes in England, either in dress or in furniture, and use of any printed dyed goods, of which cotton formed any part."[33] It was a penal offence to wear wrought silk or printed or dyed calicoes from India, Persia and China. The penalty was up to £200.[34] "Had India been independent she

would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of a foreign ruler. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms."[35] This happened at a time, when, due to the East India Company's policy of territorial aggrandizement and annexation, the chief source of demand for Indian goods the native courts—were disappearing from the Indian scene. The process of decay began by the establishment of foreign rule and helped by the force of foreign influence, was completed by the competition of foreign goods

The Industrial Revolution in England completely transformed the character of her relations with India. The expansion of British manufacture overwhelmed and ultimately destroyed the primitive Indian industry and converted the country into a source for raw material India became a major market for British goods. The condition of the uprooted artisans and craftsmen became miserable Lord William Bentinck wrote to the Court of Directors that their "misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India."[36] The population of Dacca—renowned throughout the world for the fine quality of muslin that they produced —decreased from 150,000 to 20,000 between 1827 and 1837.[37]

The transformation in trade relations had severe repercussions on the Indian social structure. The uprooted artisans fell back upon agriculture.[38] There was no possibility of the growth of a modern industrial system within the orbit of imperial relations. But there was considerable pressure on land already, and it could not sustain more; with the primitive implements available, intensive agriculture was out of the question. Also, there was the heavy incidence of the new system of land revenue. In Bengal land revenue,

which stood at £811,000 in 1764-65 was increased to £ 1,740,000 in 1765-66, the first year of the *Diwanee*.[39]

During the Hindu and the Muslim rule the "King's Share" was a proportion of the year's produce and was surrendered as a tribute of tax by the peasant joint-owners of a self-governing village community to the ruler or his nominee. "The soil in India belonged to the tribe or its subdivision—the village community, the clan or the brotherhood settled in the village—and never was considered as the property of the King.... Either in feudal or imperial scheme there never was any notion of the ownership of the soil vesting in anybody except the peasantry."[40] Under the Company's rule it was assumed that the state was the supreme landlord. In place of the traditional share of the government in the produce paid by the village communities as a whole, there was introduced a system of fixed payment in cash assessed on land which had no reference to good or bad harvest or to how much of the land was cultivated. In most cases the assessment was individual, either levied directly on the cultivator or on landlords appointed by the government. With the individual's land being directly assessed, the village community lost its economic function. Even where groups of owners or village communities were recognised as proprietors of land the results were not very different, because the responsibility was collective only in name. There was a strong trend towards individual assessment, and in practice, co-proprietors were treated as individual proprietors who could sell or mortgage their land.[41] "Our policy has been," Sir John Strachey wrote, "to encourage the growth of private property in land.... (though) former governments hardly recognised the existence of such property."[42]

The right of private ownership of land resulted in indebtedness, because "when there was no such right, there was, comparatively speaking, no credit; there was no adequate security that a landlord desirous of borrowing could offer, and there was, therefore, less indebtedness."[43] Though

mortgages were not infrequent, permanent alienations were unknown; a man could not be deprived of his inheritance for debts due either to the state or to any individual.

Under the operation of the Company's law, however, the village was usually in debt from the zamindar downwards and of all creditors the Bannia was the most pitiless.[44] It could not be otherwise. The Company's law not only gave protection to him; it also gave him land as security for his claims. "What is sad to acknowledge," writes Mark Thornhill, "by its cumbrous procedure, by its delays, and by its expensiveness, it (the new legal system) gave him (the Bannia) the means of fabricating these claims. So great were the facilities it afforded in this way, that forged documents, and false witnesses became almost stock in trade of a successful Bannia, as his account books or his commodities."[45] Moreover, a Bannia could now afford to be rapacious. Unlike in the days of native rule, his extortions could not be limited by the risk of drastic retaliation. The effect of this change in the legal system was that more land changed hands in one generation than ever before in memory. The ancient proprietors gave place to new owners, mostly Bannias.[46] These auction-purchasers, Kaye contends, dwelt principally in the cities.[47] They desired only to gain profit out of their investment unlike the old proprietors, people belonging to the soil essentially, who had loved their land for itself, independent of the rent it afforded them.[48]

For the Court of Directors of the Company, too, the land was no more than merchandize, and its sale was authorised in 1776, in default of payment on the part of the zamindars with whom the government contracts were made.[49] "Under the (new) system," Kaye writes, "men who had been proprietors of vast tracts of country as far as the eye could reach shrivelled into tenants of mud huts and possessors only of a few cooking pots."[50]

But the new system had its own inherent weaknesses. The Company could never be sure of the income from its

dominions. To overcome this uncertainty, Lord Cornwallis wrote to the Court of Directors on August 2, 1789: "It would be necessary for the public good to grant a right of property in the soil to them (zamindars) not as mere revenue agents of the state (which they had always been) but as landlords in the English sense....The outlines of the plan now proposed are well calculated *to secure and even increase your revenue*."[51]

The hopes that had been painted by Lord Cornwallis were too rosy. The Court of Directors gave its consent to the proposal of Permanent Settlement without much ado, and the revenue settlement of Bengal was declared permanent in 1793. According to Sir Richard Temple, the Permanent Settlement was "a measure which was affected to naturalize the landed institutions of England among the natives of Bengal."[52] But by this measure, as Lord Metcalfe observed, the ancient rights of the ryot "were virtually destroyed by the title of property conferred by us on those who had no pretensions to it."[53]

Even under the Permanent Settlement estates were "liable to be sold in default of payment under the provisions of Act I of 1845."[54] Holmes writes in the *History of Indian Mutiny* that the result of Cornwallis' action was that "the inferior tenants derived from it no benefit whatever. The zamindars again and again failed to pay their rent charges; and their estates were sold for the benefit of the government."[55] The collector of Midnapore wrote in 1802, that a few years of the "system of sale and attachment" had reduced most of the great zamindars in Bengal "to distress and beggary and produced a greater change in the landed property of Bengal than has, perhaps, ever happened in the same space of time in any age or country by the mere effect of internal regulations."[56]

Another consequence of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal was the subdivision of rights in land. The zamindars leased out their interests to the middlemen, and the middlemen leased out in turn, creating a long chain of rent recei-

vers and rent payers who intervened between the state and the actual cultivator. In 1819 the absolute subjection of cultivators to the mercy of the zamindars "was regretfully admitted, and yet no steps were undertaken to protect the ryot."[57] Thus, feudalism on the one hand and serfdom on the other became the principal characteristics of the land revenue system of Bengal. Thornhill appraised the new relationship thus: "The old proprietors belonged to the village; the cultivators were men of their own caste, often their relations. They loved their land for itself, independent of the rent it afforded them. The feeling of the new proprietors was different -they cared nothing for the land, they desired only to get a profit out of their investment."[58]

Sir Thomas Munro's ryotwari system of land did not produce different results. It too broke across Indian institutions, as had the zamindari system. The Madras Board of Revenue wrote on January 5, 1818: "Ignorant of the true resources of the newly-acquired countries, as of the precise nature of their landed tenures, we find a small band of foreign conquerors no sooner obtaining possession of a vast extent of territory, peopled by various nations, differing from each other in language, customs and habits, than they attempt what would be called a Herculean task, or rather a visionary project even in the most civilized countries of Europe, of which every statistical information is possessed, and of which the Government are one with the people, viz., to fix a land-rent, not on each province, district or country, nor on each estate or farm, but on every separate field within their dominions.

"In pursuit of this supposed improvement, we find them unintentionally dissolving the ancient ties, the ancient usages which united the republics of each Hindu village, and by a kind of agrarian law newly assessing and parcelling out the lands which from time immemorial had belonged to the Village Community collectively.....professing to their demand to each field, but in fact, by establishing such limits, and unattainable maximum, assessing the

ryot at discretion, and, like the Mussalman Government which preceded them, binding the ryot by force to the plough, compelling him to till land acknowledged to be over-assessed, dragging him back to it if he absconded, deferring their demand upon him until his crop came to maturity, then taking from him all that could be obtained, and leaving him nothing but his bullocks and seed grain, nay, perhaps obliged to supply him even with these, in order to renew his melancholy task of cultivating, not for himself, but for them."[59]

Dr. Francis Buchanan, who carried on a "statistical survey" on behalf of the Company between 1800 and 1814, reported that "the natives allege that....they did not actually pay one-half (to the Mughal officers) of what they do now."[60] Bishop Heber observed in 1830 in his memoirs that the peasantry in the Company's dominions was "on the whole worse off, poorer and more dispirited than the subjects of the native Princes." "The fact is," the Bishop asserted, that "no native Prince demands the rent which we do."[61]

The wealth which the Company derived from the exploitation of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa tempted it to expand its territory. The Company's armies fought twenty wars between the Battle of Plassey and the Great Rebellion. In one hundred years, Mysore, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Tanjore, Bundelkhand, Rohilkhand, Hariana, the Punjab (including pre-partition North Western Frontier Province) and Oudh were added to the Company's domain. All the former native states, from Kashmir down to Cochin, became the Company's "protectorate." What most affected the Company's soldiers was the annexation of Oudh—"the fatherland of the bulk (three-fourths) of the Company's army"[62]—by Lord Dalhousie in 1865. (Oudh had, in fact, been managed by the Company under a system of double-government since the middle of the 18th century.)[63] "The Mussalmans, not only of Oudh, but of all upper India, were embittered and angered by the suppression of one of the few Muham-

medan reigning houses which had been left in power," wrote Lieutenant-General McLeods Innes in his excellent book, *The Sepoy Revolt.*[64]

The city's six to seven thousand inhabitants, who depended on the late Court's profligacy, and the traders, who had ministered to its luxuries, lost their livelihood.[65] Thousands of others whose sole business was to cater to the Court's degrading pleasures were deprived of employment.[66] The makers of rich dresses, fine turbans, highly ornamented footwear, and many other subordinate trades, suffered severely from the cessation of the demand for the articles which they produced.[67] L. E. Ruutz Rees has described vividly the effects of the disappearance of the Court's patronage: "Thousands of nobles, gentlemen and officials, who during the King's time had held lucrative appointments, and who were too idle to work, were now in penury and want and their myriads of retainers and servants thrown out of employment.... Then the innumerable vagabonds, desperados and beggars, who under the native rule infested the city, and found bread in it, were starving under our administration. The native merchants, shopkeepers and bankers, who, while Wajid Ali was on the throne, made large profits from supplying the luxurious wants of the King, his courtiers, and the wealthy ladies of the thronged harems, found no sale for their goods; and the people in general, and especially the poor, were dissatisfied because they were taxed directly and indirectly in every way."[68]

The class which perhaps suffered most heavily was that of the talukdars.[69] Under the weak rule of the Nawab Vazier of Oudh, they had exercised authority almost independently of him,[70] extorted land revenue at the point of the bayonet[71] and kept the country in a state of instability, rendering life, property and industry insecure.[72] According to Sir W. H. Sleeman, "whenever they quarrel with each other, or with the local authorities of the (native) government, from whatever cause, they take to indiscriminate plunder and murder—over all lands not held by men of the

same class—no road, town, village, or hamlet is secure from their merciless attacks—robbery and murder become their diversions, their sports; they no more hesitate of taking the lives of men, women and children, who never offended them, than those of deer or wild hogs."[73] But even where no talukdars intervened, hundreds of villages had been ruined and desolated by the exactions of the greedy and rapacious officials—*amils*.[74] The "sufficient evidence" of the wretchedness was "miserable and starved cattle, unable to drag the wretched implements of husbandry in use, squalid and deserted villages, ruined wells, and a naked and starved peasantry."[75] M. R. Gubbins, the judicial commissioner of Oudh, on the eve of and during the revolt, observed that "I have never met with such evidence of general poverty as in Oudh."[76] Of the conditions of the Oudh peasantry in the pre-annexation period, Kaye said, that "never were the evils of misrule more horribly apparent, never were the vices of indolent and rapacious government productive of a greater sum of misery."[77]

The utter worthlessness of the upper classes was therefore assumed as a fact by the Company. The Company's servants convinced themselves that the liquidation of the landed aristocracy was the greatest benefit that could be conferred upon the people of Oudh.[78] In pursuance of this end, the Inam Commission was appointed to enquire into the titles and deeds of the landlords. In the five years that preceded the revolt, more than 21,000 of the 35,000 estates were confiscated.[79]

G. B. Seton-Karr in his memorial to the Governor-General compared the working of the Inam Commission to that of a "shearing house." He wrote: "Each day produced its list of victims; and the good fortune of those who escaped but added to the pangs of the crowd that came forth from the shearing house, shorn to the skin, unable to work, ashamed to beg, condemned to penury."[80] Thornhill characterized the decisions of the Commission "as acts of confiscation."[81]

Thus, families who had held possession of inherited es-

tates for long years, and never doubted the security of their tenure, found themselves deprived of their freeholds. In this way, observed Kaye, "a revolution was gradually brought about by means of English application (of law), which, acting coincidently with the other agencies, swelled the number of the dissatisfied, dangerous classes, who traced their downfall to the operations of the British rule, and sullenly bided their time for the recovery of what they had lost, in some new revolutionary epoch."[82]

The tiller of the soil did not derive any benefit from all this, as the Company had claimed that he would. Its servants were anxious to show a large balance-sheet to the Court of Directors to prove them the profitable nature of the new acquisition. To increase the total collection, they increased, therefore, the rate of land revenue.[83] Gubbins is constrained to admit that the pressure of the government's demand in many districts was "greatly too high."[84] Thornhill describes the settlement of the land revenue as "cruel."[85] He writes: "Our land revenue was undoubtedly too highly assessed, and our system of enforcing payments by the sale of land made its severity the more felt. All our law, by assisting the extortions of the Bannias, cast on our government the odium of much of their rapacity." Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who cannot be accused of ever having been anti-British in his sentiments, remarks in his brochure, *The Cause of the Indian Revolt*, that "the system of Revenue Settlement, introduced by the English Government is undoubtedly creditable. But the rate of land revenue is *heavy* (italics mine) when compared with former settlements.... The assessments imposed by the English government have been fixed without any regard to the various contingencies. Land lying fallow pays in the same proportion as cultivated land.... The cultivators are obliged to borrow money in order to pay land revenue. The interest on these loans is exorbitant."[86]

A large number of estates every year were auctioned under the decrees of the courts, in lieu of debts which

sometimes ran to no more than a couple of rupees. They were bought by new men from the Lower Provinces. The former proprietors, who still belonged to the soil, were reduced to the position of small farmers and under-tenants on their ancestral lands. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan describes the effect of the numerous sales of landed property in the first days of British rule by saying that Indian society was turning upside down.[87]

The introduction of judicial and revenue stamp paper, which was contrary to the spirit of Indian custom and tradition, put a heavier burden on the already pauperized people. It also tended greatly to hinder the administration of justice.[88] To cap all this, a heavy tax on opium was imposed. This inflamed the discontent of the poorer population.[89] So now there was a tax "on petitions, on food, on houses, on eatables, on ferries. There was an opium contractor, a contractor for supplying corn and provisions, a salt and spirit contractor and in fact contracts were given for everything that in Paris would come under the name of *octroi*. Everything in the shape of food was consequently very dear.... contractors.... were making large fortunes, while the people suffered by their extortions."[90]

The disbandment of the former King's army, which had swollen to 70,000 men, according to Resident Lowe's calculations,[91] had thrown a horde of desperados upon Oudh. "To discharge a sepoy was to create a bandit," remarked Lt.-General Innes.[92] There was not a family in Oudh which did not have one member at least serving in the army. The region was thus overrun by the disbanded soldiers who had found no place in the new Oudh Irregular Force and the military police.[93] The disbandment resulted in forced unemployment in almost every Oudh peasant's home.

To this military class, hitherto favoured, the annexation of Oudh proved prejudicial also for another reason: "the home of the sepoys and the garden-plot of the pensioner were no longer exempted from taxes."[94] Because of this

"14,000 petitions had emanated between the annexation and the Mutiny from 75,000 sepoys belonging to the province against the hardships of the revenue system."[95] Of the sepoys, 25,000 were Brahmins. They were doubly hit when lands attached to charitable institutions were confiscated. With the snatching away of their comfortable income, members of the priestly class "turned their power which they exercised over the minds of others to fateful accounts by fomenting popular discontent, and instilling into the minds of the people the poison of religious fear."[96]

The conditions created by the annexation of Oudh have been admirably summed up by Malleson : "The annexation of Oudh....alienated the rulers of Native States, who saw in that act indulgence in a greed of power to be satiated neither by unswerving loyalty nor by timely advances of money on loan to the dominant power. It alienated the territorial aristocracy, who found themselves suddenly stripped, by the action of the newly-introduced British system, sometimes of one half of their estates, sometimes even of more. It alienated the Mohammedan aristocracy—the courtiers—men whose income depended upon the appointments and pensions they received from the favour of their prince. It alienated the military class serving under the king, ruthlessly cast back upon their families with small pensions or gratuities. It contributed to alienate the British sepoys recruited in Oudh—and who so long as their country continued independent, possessed by virtue of the privilege granted them of acting on the Court of Lucknow by means of petitions presented by the British Resident, a sure mode of protecting their families from oppression. It alienated alike the peasantry of the country and the petty artisans of the towns, who did not relish the change of a system, which, arbitrary and tyrannical though it may be, they thoroughly understood, for another system, the first elements of which were taxation of articles of primary necessity. In a word, the annexation of Oudh converted a country, the loyalty of whose inhabitants to the British had

become proverbial, into a hotbed of discontent and of intrigue."[97]

There was, in addition, the dissatisfaction of the Indian people over their exclusion from lucrative offices and jobs. This difficulty pressed more heavily on the Muslims than on the Hindus. The latter generally did not take service. They were engaged in such work as their forefathers had done before them. The Brahmins were favoured by tradition and did not need to go into service; the Vaishyas were traders and bankers; the Kshatriyas, once rulers of the country, kept each his small portion of land, preserving a semblance of authority. There was only one section among the Hindus—the Kayasths—that earned its livelihood from public service.[98]

Muslims, on the other hand, depended largely on public service. Before the Company's rule, they had filled the most honourable posts in Muslim governments, and they still hoped for similar jobs. But under the Company's administration, they were denied these. The jobs that were available to them, such as in the Company's army as sepoys, they looked upon with disfavour. The reason for this dislike was simple: under their own governments, they had held the highest civil and military offices, and enjoyed emoluments not inferior to those received under the Company's rule by Europeans. Some of them had received Rs. 1,000 per mensem as commandants of cavalry; but now their sons could draw a pay of only Rs. 80—and that too if they were fortunate enough to become Risaldars.[99] The extinction of native states aggravated the situation. The Duke of Wellington had probably this in mind when he remarked that to annex a state was "to degrade and beggar the natives, making them all enemies."[100] Sir Thomas Munro also pointed out that this policy "debased the whole people."[101]

The Europeans, who filled these posts did not, and were not expected to, maintain large retinues, as the Indians in the former governments had done, and would probably do if they were given the posts. Thus the poorer sections of the

Indian people would in any case have been unable to obtain those posts, whatever the government ruling over them. The consequence of this was that they were prepared to join in any upheaval on the chance of improving their lot. In fact many of them took service with the rebels for the amazing sum of one anna or one-and-a-half anna per diem, and many instead of cash accepted a couple or perhaps one and a half seers of grain daily.[102]

Whilst the resumption of "religious endowments.... grievously affected the old Mussalman families, roused their resentment, made them ripe for sedition,"[103] the new system of education, based on the primacy of the English language, and western literature and science, pushed the Muslim intelligentsia into insignificance. Kaye admits that "the tendency of our educational measures, and the all-pervading Englishism with which the country was threatened, was to lower the dignity of Muhammedanism and to deprive of their emoluments many influential people of that intolerant faith."[104] The abolition of the use of Persian language in the law courts, and admission into public service by examination, also decreased, if they did not wholly destroy, the Muslims' chances of official employment.[105]

Lówe summed up the situation succinctly enough to justify a somewhat lengthy quotation : "It is quite evident that the resources of this country, instead of being developed and improved, have been permitted to lie as they did a thousand years ago, and decay; that such of the native arts and manufactures as used to raise for India a name and wonder all over the Western world are nearly extinguished in the present day; once renowned and great cities are merely heaps of ruins—dens for hyenas and jackals, its colleges are no more—the wise men of the East live only in fables and histories of the past; its temples and wondrous caves of Ajanta and Ellora and other places are crumbling fast to dust; and by and by there will scarcely be a trace of them left; its tanks and caravanserais are going and gone

to rapid ruin; its canals for irrigation are filled up and forgotten; while districts have been deserted by their inhabitants, and the jungle and wild beasts have succeeded them and deadly malaria closed them....ruin, ruin, poverty.... as though a leper had touched the land, it were hastening to decay.... No one who has eyes and ears to use, can doubt for a moment that we have almost totally neglected the resources of such a mighty country, while we have introduced the trash of our manufacturing towns into every cranny of the land.... It appears as though we had endeavoured to destroy every inherent useful production of Eastern merchandize."[106] And Lowe asks, "What must be the end of such short-sightedness if such an erroneous line of policy is pursued ?"[107]

In the midst of this intense suffering, a long-drawn out depression (1825-54) characterized by a particularly steep decline of prices, cut across the deplorable economic, political and social conditions.[108] In 1850, the production of silver fell short of the world demand for it, and this aggravated the situation further—first, because Indian currency had been placed on an exclusively silver basis by an Act of 1835; and secondly, because India was still passing through the transition from barter to money economy.[109]

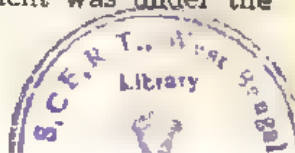
At this critical moment in the expansion of their influence and power, the British suffered reverses in the First Afghan War (1838-42), the Crimean War (1854-56) and in the two wars against the Sikhs (1845-49). This nearly shattered the general belief "in their invincibility," despite the fact that they won all these wars; for the people discovered that the British were no supermen. They were capable of making almost fatal mistakes—mistakes which perhaps clever adversaries could exploit.[110]

As belief in the invincibility of the British army had almost ended, the sepoys convinced themselves that the many victories which the English had gained, had been due entirely to the Indians' prowess. They believed and voiced the belief in no uncertain terms that they had enabled the

English to conquer Hindustan from Burma to Kabul.[111] The composition of the Company's army was also favourable to the growth of this belief. There were 360,000 sepoys as against 40,000 British soldiers, and 12,000 Indian gunners as against 6,500 European.[112]

Another nearly shattered belief was in the inexhaustibility of British resources. Kaye has emphasized this: "The idea broached in Parliament of drawing troops from India for the Crimean War, took intelligent natives of India by surprise.... We could not more loudly proclaim the inadequacy of our resources than by denuding ourselves in one quarter of the world that we might clothe ourselves sufficiently in another."[113]

In these circumstances, the sepoys were quick to take offence when they were told that they would no longer enjoy the privileges of foreign service (batta) when serving in Sind, or in the Punjab. They asked why they should not have the same privileges merely because the British boundary-line had been extended to what was recently foreign soil. Reconciliation to the decision was almost impossible in the context of their conviction that the territories could not have been conquered without them. They felt embittered because their employer the Company had rewarded them for their good services by depriving them of a well-deserved portion of their pay.[114]

Another matter that touched the sepoys to the quick was the Company's alleged interference in their religious beliefs. Acts such as the abolition of *Sati*, legalization of remarriage of Hindu widows, and prohibition of the killing of daughters, whether in themselves good or bad, were repugnant to Indian customs and traditions. They increased the suspicions of the Indians.[115] In 1850, an act was passed permitting converts to Christianity to retain their patrimony. In the midst of the furore this created among Indian people, a letter by one Mr. Edmond was circulated from Calcutta to all the principal officials of the Company's government. The letter said that as the entire sub-continent was under the

control of a Christian power, it was but right to convert the Indian people to the Christian faith.[116] "It is no metaphor to say that the Indian people were blinded with fear at learning of this circular," writes Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.[117] It was rumoured that the Indian servants of the Company would be the first to be converted to Christianity, and after that the mass of the people. It was presumed that the letter was written by order of the government. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal issued a denial to these remours when he heard of Edmond's letter. But the denial offered only a temporary relief; the general belief remained that government had only postponed the project and would resume it the moment it felt strong enough to do so.[118]

There is no doubt that the Company's government was at best only slightly acquainted with the prevailing mental climate. There was no communication between rulers and the ruled, no living together or near one another—as had always been the custom among conquerors who came from the north-west. The English rulers always looked forward to retirement, and returning "home." They seldom came to settle in India.[119]

The Indian people had no voice in the administration of the country. The government could, therefore, never know the inadvisibility or otherwise of the laws and regulations which it passed. It could never hear, as it ought to have heard, the voice of the people on these subjects. The people had no means of protesting against what they felt was wrong, or of giving expression to their wishes. "But the greatest mischief lay in this that the people misunderstood the views and the intentions of the government. They misapprehended every act, and whatever law was passed was misconstrued by men who had no share in the framing of it, and hence no means of judging its spirit. At length, the Indians fell into the habit of thinking that all laws were passed with a view to degrade and ruin them, and to deprive them and their compatriots of their religion....At last came the time when all men looked upon the English government as slow poison,

a rope of sand, a treacherous flame of fire They began to believe that if today they escaped from the clutches of the government, tomorrow they would fall into them; or that even if they escaped the morrow, the third day would see their ruin. When the rulers and ruled occupy relatively such a position as this, what hope is there of loyalty or of good will?"[120]

Not that all Englishmen were ignorant of the feelings of Indian subjects. Some of them actually warned the Company's government of the explosive situation in their territory. Metcalfe had expected "to wake up some fine morning and find that India had been lost to the English Crown."[121] Colonel Sleeman had written to Dalhousie in April 1852 that the native states "might unite in some desperate act."[122] Director Tucker warned the government that the talukdars of Oudh were silent because "the natives of India are accustomed to endure and to submit to the will of their rulers; but if an enemy were to appear on our western frontier, or if an insurrection unhappily takes place, we shall find these talukdars in the adverse ranks, and their ryots and retainers under the same standard."[123] Lord Canning said, prior to his departure from London : "We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger may at last threaten to burst, and overwhelm us with ruin."[124] The Company's government remained oblivious to these warnings.

It was a climactic time.[125] Even a normally innocent act could unwittingly have ignited the situation. And at that time the government decided to introduce new cartridges, which the sepoys believed were really greased with the fat of cows and pigs, and the use of which would deprive them of caste and religion. "And thus a chance spark, but a fiery one, fell upon combustible material and caught at once."[127] The hatred that was suppressed after Plassey and had accumulated since then erupted violently. The dispossessed, discontented Rajas and Ranis, zamindars

and tenants, artisans and workers, the Muslim priests and intelligentsia and the Hindu Pandits saw the eruption as an opportunity to redress their grievances. The British faced for the first time since their arrival in India such a powerful combination of divergent elements.

III. THE ORGANIZATION

The question arises, then : What kind of organization was it that organized, canalized and later led the rebellion ?

We know little about the organization of the rebels especially in the pre-rebellion period. The reason for this is obvious. The rebels worked illegally, and therefore kept no records about the nature, the functions and the structure of their secret organization. Books on the revolt are replete, no doubt, with the accounts of itinerant Moulavis and Faqirs, Pandits and Sanyasis, the volunteer begging parties and the Madaris who roamed from place to place and spread the message of revolt. Such books abound also in stories about the red lotuses and *chappatis* passing from village to village. The author of *A Narrative of the Indian Revolt* has described the passing of the lotus thus : "A man appeared with a lotus flower and handed it to the chief of the regiment. He handed it on to another—every man took it and passed it on and when it came to the last, he suddenly disappeared to the next station. There was not, it appears, a detachment, not a station in Bengal through which the lotus flower was not circulated."[128] Sir George Otto Trevelyan is of the opinion that the red lotus united all the sepoys.[129] Each one was made to swear over the red lotus that he would act with the others when the call came.

After this ceremony every regiment created its own secret branch of the organization. "From the available evidence....," writes Wilson, in his *Defence of Lucknow*, "every regiment had a committee of three members and this used to do everything connected with this Mutiny.... The committee had to decide on all important schemes, to do

all the correspondence, and several other things."[130] According to Savarkar,[131] the sepoys used to meet secretly at night. All resolutions were passed in the general meetings, and all the decisions that were taken in the inner circles were obeyed strictly.

When the sepoys came to attend the secret meetings, they would conceal their identity by covering their faces completely except the eyes. At the meetings they dilated upon the thousand and one oppressions committed in the country by the British.[132] If any one was suspected of being an informer, he was immediately put to death. When a regiment was fully organized, the chief committee of that regiment began negotiations with the chief committee of another for working together. The binding oaths of the regiments, like those of the individual sepoys, were precise and determined. Every regiment was a unit in the larger organization. To facilitate deliberations between the various regiments, it was arranged that on festive occasions regiments should invite one another for celebration. This afforded a pretext for united secret meetings. Selected sepoys met in the houses of the subedars. The work of deciding important matters was left to the officers.[133]

The circulation of *chappatis* on the eve of the outbreak was, in all probability, a signal to prepare the people for the coming upheaval. Nawab Moinuddin describes how early one morning in February the watchman of Serai Farukh Khan brought a *chappati* and asked him to cook five similar ones to send to the five nearest villages, with the instruction that each village chowkidar was to prepare five similar *chappatis* for distribution in the same way. Each *chappati* was made of barley and wheat flour. It was about the size of a man's palm, and weighed two tolas.[134]

This circulation of *chappatis* was an exact repetition of what had happened before the Mahrattas invaded northern India in 1803; the only difference was that in place of mutton, a sprig of millet had accompanied the *chappati*.[135]

Similarly, before the Santal rebellion a branch of the *Sal* tree had been circulated from village to village.[136] According to Sir John Malcolm "there had been a mysterious circulation of sugar grist before the Mutiny of the Coast Army in 1806."[137] Dim prophecies and rumours foreshadowing a holocaust came in the wake of these *chappatis*. They created alarm in the public mind.

It was generally believed by British authorities at that time that the rebellion was principally organized by the Muslims. The Rev. J. Cave-Browne asserts that the Punjab government from the beginning declared that the revolt was essentially of Hindustani and Mohammedan origin. The Mohammedans were regarded as the instigators, and the Hindus the dupes.[138] Gubbins concurs with Cave-Browne. He says that the Mohammedans "had carefully fostered and had turned the alarm of the Hindus to their advantages."[139] Major F. J. Harriot, Deputy Advocate-General to the military commission which tried Bahadur Shah "Zafar," said: "It is a most significant fact of these proceedings that though we come upon traces of Mussalman intrigue wherever our investigation has carried us, yet not one paper has been found to show that the Hindus, as a body, had been conspiring against us, or that their Brahmins and priests had been preaching a crusade against the Christians.....A *Mohammedan* priest with pretended vision and assumed miraculous powers—a *Mohammedan* King, his dupe and his accomplice—a *Mohammedan* clandestine embassy to the *Mohammedan* powers of Persia and Turkey—*Mohammedan* prophecies as to the downfall of our power—*Mohammedan* rule as the successor of our own—the most cold-blooded murders by *Mohammedan* assassins—a religious war for *Mohammedan* ascendancy—a *Mohammedan* press unscrupulously abetting—and *Mohammedan* sepoys initiating the Mutiny. Hinduism, I may say, is nowhere either reflected or represented; if it is brought forward at all, it is only in subservience to its ever aggressive neighbour."[140] Subaltern Roberts (later Field-Marshal Lord Roberts) therefore

wanted to show "these rascally Mussalmans" that "with God's help, Englishmen will still be masters of India."[141]

The assertion that the instigation was Mohammedan was reinforced by the fact that "a bit of raw flesh" had accompanied the *chappatis.*[142] Hindus, being generally vegetarians, it was thought that they would not have permitted this. However, there are some flaws in this which would make this interpretation unacceptable. In the first place, "Mohammedans are bad conspirators; their methods are too clumsy; they are too ready to break into violence....on the other hand, the Hindus have a geniuus for conspiracy; they possess a power of patience, of foreseeing results, of carefully weighing chances, of chosing time and weapon, of profiting by circumstances, never losing sight of the object desired, taking advantage of every turn of fortune—all qualities invaluable for success in intrigue."[143] Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe is, therefore, of the opinion that the "bit of raw flesh might have signified extermination."[144] This interpretation is supported by Kaye's statement that "Mohammedans and Hindus were plainly united against us."[145] The banning of cow killing soon after the rebels captured power anywhere also supports the conclusion that the rebellion was a joint Hindu-Muslim venture.[146] Moreover, five of the ten members of the Court of Administration, appointed by the rebels in Delhi, were Hindus: General Ghowri Shankar and Subedar-Majors Bahadur Jiwa Ram, Shiv Ram Misr, Het Ram, Beni Ram.[147]

According to Colonel G. B. Malleson, Moulavi Ahmadullah Shah of Fyzabad was "undoubtedly a leader of the conspiracy"[148] and this cannot be denied. But it cannot also be denied that Nana Sahib and many others were leaders too. About Nana Sahib, Kaye remarked that "there is nothing in my mind more substantiated than the complicity of Nana Sahib in widespread intrigues before the outbreak of the Mutiny. The concurrent testimony of witnesses examined in parts of the country, widely distinct from each other, takes his story altogether out of the conjectural."[149]

Besides, Kunwar Singh of Bihar, Azimullah, Bakht Khan, Ali Naqi Khan, Rango Bapuji, Tatya Tope, and Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi were acknowledged leaders of the rebels. (In course of the rebellion, differences between the two communities of course did arise. These will be dealt in a subsequent section.)

Their method of working in the pre-revolt days has been speculated upon by Nawab Moinuddin, Kotwal of Delhi during the rebellion, in his book *Two Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi*. According to him, the burning down of the house of a European or of a telegraph office was in the nature of a signal. The burning of a telegraph office would immediately be communicated along the line from Calcutta to Punjab, and it was calculated that those in the know of the secret would understand on hearing this that they too must do likewise.[150] Information of this arson was widely circulated in the country; it is said that letters were sent from regiment to regiment inciting the sepoys to similar acts and non-compliance was threatened with social (or caste) ostracism.[151] In all correspondence, the rebels used a kind of cipher composed of dots and numbers. Mention of names was carefully avoided.[152] Azimullah, according to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, even carried on treasonable correspondence with Omar Pasha of Constantinopole, in which he told of the sepoys' discontent, the troubled state of India generally and solicited Turkish help for throwing off the British yoke. Lord Roberts also states that Azimullah carried on similar correspondence with the French government through French settlers in Chandranagar.[153]

Cracford Wilson after "carefully collating oral information with facts as they occurred" felt convinced that Sunday, 31st May 1857, had been the day fixed for rebellion to commence throughout the Bengal army.[154] But other equally competent observers did not accept Wilson's "findings." For instance, Sir John Lawrence categorically asserted that "not one of the numerous letters which had been intercepted, written by the sepoys, contained so much as a

hint of such a plot, and that none of the faithful sepoys, none of the condemned mutineers who might have saved their lives by disclosing it, if it existed, knew anything about it."[155] "How is it," he asked, "that the people or soldiers did not rise simultaneously in insurrection ?" Even if it is presumed that the time fixed for it was anticipated by the Meerut outbreak, "how came it then that the news of that outbreak was not followed by immediate insurrection?"[156]

Doubtless, these are cogent arguments. But they are belied by the facts; they fail to answer certain pertinent questions: Why, on May 11, 1857, did the sepoys at Delhi open out so as to expose their officers to the fire of the Meerut rebels ?[157] Why did the sepoys rise in revolt on such a large scale within a month or two ? The fact that the rebels could organize an uprising which covered the country between the Ganges and the Jamuna speaks volumes of conspiratorial arrangement and also of the organizational ability of the leaders of the revolt. That the building of the organization had not progressed sufficiently far is, however, evident from the absence of any unified plan of campaign and of an over-all command.

We can, therefore, safely conclude that the rebels had built up an "organization" in the pre-rebellion days. It is, also, equally evident that the organization was still in an embryonic stage at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion.

IV. THE EXTENT

The revolt, which began in Meerut on May 10, 1857, spread like wildfire. Within a week of the breaking out of the rebellion the English empire in upper India had all but disappeared.[158] Between the frontiers of Bengal and Punjab, English authority was acknowledged only for a few miles around Agra, and in some other isolated spots where there happened to be English regiments. "To live in India now," wrote Lowe, "was like standing on the verge of a volcanic crater, the sides of which were fast crumbling

away from our feet, while the boiling lava was ready to erupt and consume us."[159] Every ploughshare in upper India was being turned into a sword.

The Meerut rebels rushed to Delhi, the age-old capital of India. They entered it through Delhi Gate, without any serious opposition, besieged the last Moghul, Bahadur Shah "Zafar" and proclaimed him the *Shahensha-e-Hindustan.*[160] The administration of Oudh fell like a house of cards.[161] British authority was merely confined to the provincial capital and its neighbourhood,[162] writes Gubbins. In Rohilkhand, the whole countryside was in rebellion.[163] Khan Bahadur Khan proclaimed himself the viceroy of the Emperor of India.[164] Nearly all Bundelkhand was up in arms against the British.[165] The entire Doab was in the throes of revolution.[166] McLeod Innes observed that "there was forthwith a cessation of *Pax Britannica,* and the entire disorganisation of the civil administration in the upper provinces, i.e., the plains watered by the Ganges and the Jamuna, down to the Bengal proper."[167] Of Central India, Canning wrote, "I look upon Central India as gone; and to be reconquered."

In Kanpur Nana Sahib "led" the rebels.[168] The villagers of the neighbourhood, exhorted by the Mahratta Pundits, who were preaching a crusade on behalf of the Nana, were arrayed with the rebels.[169] A single thought ran through every mind in the area—"now or never was the time to shake off the oppression of the stranger."[170] In Jhansi, Lakshmi Bai "raised the banner of revolt."[171] The fanatical influence of the Wahabis in Patna and of the Brahmins in Banaras made these two cities formidable.[172] The high price of food grains and other provisions which was always attributed to British rule, came in handy as justification and propaganda to the rebels of Allahabad.[173] In Bihar, the Permanent Settlement vanished like a dream.[174]

Generally, the revolt of the sepoys was followed or accompanied by a rebellion in the city and the countryside.

But in several places the people rose in revolt before the sepoys.[175] Wherever revolt broke out, the government treasury was plundered, the magazine was sacked, barracks and court houses were burnt and prison gates were flung open.[176] The rebels "everywhere displayed towards the government records the same animosity as they did to the account books of the Bannias and for a similar reason. They regarded them as machinery by which we enforced our severe taxation and maintained that disciplined order which had become so distasteful to them."[177] They therefore destroyed the government's records and condemned the Bannias' account books to the same fate. "Dispossessed landowners, clutching at the opportunity for which they had long awaited, gathered their tenants together, hunted out the pursé-proud upstarts, who had bought up their estates, and triumphantly established themselves in their ancestral homes. Insolent debtors mobbed and slaughtered.... the Bannias, whose extortions they would have punished before but for the dread of the strong arm of law."[178] Traders were forced to help the rebels to save themselves.[179]

After destroying the visible vestiges of foreign rule in the regimental centre, the sepoys turned their attention to Delhi. Its conquest imparted a political significance to a movement which might otherwise have been regarded as little more than a local outburst. Even Lowe, who was by no means an admirer of things and persons Indian, has to admit that the rebels had selected "a grand centre of operation, well stored with every munition of war a first class arsenal should contain; a city fortified, rich in native wealth, and splendour, containing one of the largest treasuries of the British and powder magazine of an enormous magnitude.... (and an) inimical Mohammedan population."[180] Strategically also, the seizure of Delhi was a master stroke. Here the relieving English forces would be hemmed in and cut off from their base and would have to disappear, handicapped as they were by the sheer absence of means to replace the losses.[181] It thus fixed the vital struggle at a site where

the large body of English troops in India could be most easily dealt with.

But the decision to restore the authority to the last Moghul and of Nana Sahib, a Mahratta, aroused apprehension among the Rajput States, among the Sikhs in the Punjab, and in the mind of the Nizam of Hyderabad. About the strategic importance of the Rajput States, Lord Canning confessed in a despatch to the Court of Directors, that "if Scindia joins the rebellion, I shall have to pack off tomorrow."[182] The rulers as well as the people of the Rajput States feared that the triumph of the rebels would mean the revival of loot and plunder, and destruction at the hands of both the Moghul and the Mahratta freebooters. They remembered vividly the time when they did not enjoy the "protection" of the Company. They, therefore, feared the loss of "peace, stability and security," which had followed in the wake of that "protection," which had been backed by the proclamations and practice of George Lawrence.[183] For the sake of self-preservation, they therefore helped the power which had rescued them from Moghul and Mahratta brigandage. The Nizam, too, showed no sympathy for the rebels. His ancestors had been able to create a "state" because of declining Moghul power. He did not, therefore, look forward to that power's restoration.[184] Canning paid the Indian States a well-deserved tribute when he remarked that they "acted as the breakwaters to the storm which would have otherwise swept us in one great wave."[185]

The rebels had expected active support from the Punjab. They reasoned that since it had been conquered only eight years earlier, British rule could hardly have won the hearts of the people and their loyalty. On its support or otherwise the fate of the British depended in India. Thornhill admits that "if the Punjab rose our position would be all but desperate....we might not be able to hold out till assistance arrived from England."[186] But the Punjab remained "on the whole, loyal."[187] Instead, from this province, the Bri-

tish were able to raise 39,000 men of all communities, creeds and dialects.[188]

The causes for the Punjab's antipathy to the rebellion were many and varied. The Sikh sardars were afraid of the restoration of the Moghul hegemony as it would have meant their own certain suppression.[189] Moreover, Sir Henry Lawrence had dealt gently with them, respected their fallen fortunes, and laid a lighter hand upon their tenure than the British had in any other province.[190] "The magnificent success of Sir John Lawrence's Government during the rebellion," writes G. W. Forrest, "must be in a large degree attributed to the measure carried out by Sir Henry Lawrence for upholding the jagirdars[191] in their ancient rights."[192] Those sardars who were suspected had been deported; and those who were allowed to remain, remembering the tyranny of the Khalsa army, shrunk from the prospect of success of a revolt which would probably place them at the mercy of another equally tyrannical army.[193] The dispossessed Sikh feudal barons, leaders of the Sikh Wars, remembering their defeat at the hands of the Poorbeah sepoys led by the Company's officers, rushed to help the British. They thus hoped to avenge that defeat and, by winning British favour, to regain their former positions and privileges.[194] They had not, moreover, forgotten that the Poorbeah sepoys had stigmatized them "as men of low caste."[195]

The Sikh people shunned the idea of joining the rebels also because it seemed to them inevitable that success of the rebellion should bring in its wake religious persecution at the hands of the Muslims. The martyrdom of their ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, and the two *ghalogharas* (massacres) were still fresh in their memory. John Lawrence, estimating rightly their feelings, had spread the tale that the King of Delhi would reward any one who killed a Sikh and brought his head for proof.[196]

It would not be accurate to say that only the Sikhs from amongst the Punjabis, had stood by the British. The Pun-

jabis helped them as a whole during the rebellion. The villagers belonging to all the three communities—Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims—assisted the British authorities to capture rebels at various places.[197] The land revenue was paid regularly and almost to the last pie.[198] Holmes records that incomes from "the excise taxes positively increased and there was but little falling off in the attendance of the government schools."[199] Indeed, writes the Reverend Cave-Browne, "in some districts of the Punjab, the payments (of land revenue and other taxes) were made before they were actually due; a fact which carried with it the cheering conviction that with the mass of the population....the continuance of our Raj was really desired.... (They) had no wish to change masters, especially with the prospect of the interregnum of anarchy...."[200]

In Peshawar, the government raised big loans from the merchants. The merchants thus came to have a stake in the continuance of the Company's government. "They were converted from indifferent spectators of the rebellion to interested supporters of the law."[201]

The Muslims of the Punjab, too, were afraid to side with the rebels. The British had saved them from the oppression of the Sikhs. While in other parts of India, the British had caused the ruin and suppression of the Muslims, in the Punjab they were their saviours.[202]

Frederick Cooper says that "certain great causes have doubtless operated in keeping the Swatis, Peshawaris and Kabulis well affected. The assessment of the valley is of lightness to them formerly unknown. The Duranis ground the people to dust. They do so at Kabul to this day. The Sikhs levied annually twelve lakhs from the valley and as much more in plunder. The British government contents itself, and makes the people content, by taking six lakhs, and spending as much monthly.... The large expenditure, and the vast number of troops, have opened out a market for cereal produce, as well as for wood and the fruits of the hills. So much so that the greatest punishment to a fractious tribe

is to shut them out from the Peshawar and cantonment markets."[203] Kaye cynically observes that "much as those wild Muslims loved Mohammed, they loved money more.... every man who had a matchlock or a *talwar* or, better still a horse to bring to the muster, came forward with his tender of service to the British officers at Peshawar."[204]

The explanation of the enigmatic behaviour of the Punjabis is understandable. The conquest of the Punjab had been so recent that the Punjabis had not had time to forget the evils from which that conquest had set them free[205] and to experience the evils which had followed in the wake of British rule in other provinces. Under the new regime the burden of the taxes and levies which had increased enormously in the anarchy that followed Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death had been lightened. Dacoity had almost been stamped out.[206] A summary and equitable settlement of land revenue had increased the prosperity of the ryot and made him contented.[207] The new rulers had assessed the land rather low, "leaving a fair and liberal margin to the occupiers of the soil."[208] Because of the Punjab's proximity to the frontier, they had not meddled with its land tenure system. The construction of new roads, canals, and bridges and the preservation of forests and grazing tracts had been undertaken vigorously.[209] In short, the Punjabis came to know of the benefits of a strong government after years of unrest and anarchy.[210]

The Punjab had been blessed, too, with a succession of golden harvests, such as had not been known for years.[211] "The country was too happy and prosperous," writes Cooper in *The Crisis in the Punjab*, "to join in any *emeute*, out of pure friendship,"[212] and run the risk of an uncertain future.[213]

In addition, according to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, there were other "cogent causes."[214] In the first place, "the poverty which was rife in India had not yet had time to affect the Punjab." Secondly, there was a powerful European army on the spot. Thirdly, wisdom was shown by the officials in

at once disarming the sepoys. Fourthly, the whole of the Punjab had been disarmed, after annexation. Fifthly, Punjabis and Pathans had already taken service and there was no unemployed population to be tempted to untoward adventures. Sixthly, the desire for plunder in Hindustan (that is, Delhi, Lucknow and Agra etc.) had possessed them. "Thus, the submission, if not acquiescence, of the more dangerous class, was secure," writes Sir John William Kaye.[215]

In the early days of the rebellion, however, Punjabi "support" to the British was "passive."[216] "They enlisted but not in great numbers. They held back until Delhi had fallen, and then recruits came in thousands," writes Sir Charles Aitchison in his *Life of Lord Lawrence*.[217]

V. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

In the wake of the initial success of the rebels came the weakening and disintegration of the strong anti-British combine. The hatred of foreign rule had brought the rebels together; different concepts of "free" India threw them apart. Feudal rivalry rose between the Moghuls and the Mahrattas. It was because of this that Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the last Peshwa, refused to go to Delhi. He feared he would be "overshadowed by the Moghul court," and lose his individual power and influence among the host of princes.[218]

The feudal barons who fomented or acquiesced in or later joined the rebellion in a bid to regain their "absolute rule in the zamindari"[219] were shocked to find the control of the movement gradually slipping out of their hands. A contemporary writer in the *Calcutta Review* (1858) noted that "not a few of the rajas were wise enough to see that a servile war, an uprising of the lower against the higher classes, would not answer their purpose."[220] The plans chalked out by the rebels for the political and economic re-

construction of the country show that the Rajas had assessed well.

Bahadur Shah was declared *Shahenshah-e-Hind* on May 11, 1857. But in truth he was reduced to a mere nonentity in the first week of July—that is, towards the close of the first phase of the revolt. The rebels of Delhi issued a *Parwanah*,[221] after the arrival of General Bakht Khan, outlining the structure of the new state. Bahadur Shah was again formally proclaimed the Emperor of India, but the real executive power was vested in the Court of Administration.[222] The Court was to administer the state, maintain peace and order, collect land revenue from the sub-divisions and raise loans from the Mahajans,[223] defend the realm and prosecute wars.[224] The Emperor had promised the Court that "in reference to you no representation of any party whatever will be heeded; and in all such orders as may emanate from your Court, none of the servants of the State, nor the Princes Royal, will in any way interfere."[225]

The Court of Administration was to consist of ten members; six from the army and four from the civilian departments.[226] The representation of the army was equally distributed among its three branches—infantry, cavalry and artillery.[227] Members were to be elected by a majority vote from amongst "intelligent, wise, capable and experienced men who had also to their credit a record of past faithful service."[228] The last condition is not wholly intelligible in view of the fact that only a few of the rebels had any claims on past services. Perhaps, and one cannot be certain about this, it was for this reason precisely that this condition was not made absolute. For, it was specifically provided that this condition could be waived in the case of very capable and intelligent persons.[229] The civilian members of the Court were to be selected in the same manner by their respective (?) departments.[230]

One out of the ten members of the Court was to be elected President[231] (*Sadr-e-Jalsa*) and another Vice-Pre-

sident[232] (*Naib Sadr-e-Jalsa*) by a majority vote. The President of the Court had two votes. Each member of the Court was in charge of the department of the state from which he had been elected.[233] He was assisted by a Committee, consisting of four members of the Court. Each Committee could have as many secretaries attached to it as were required. Proposals passed by a majority vote in a Committee were forwarded to the Court for approval through the member-in-charge.[234] No specific mention was made of the headships of the departments whose representatives on the Court were elected President and Vice-President. Presumably, they were to act as the heads of their respective departments in addition to their duties as President and Vice-President. "The government at Delhi," wrote Sir George Campbell, "seems to have been a sort of constitutional Milocracy. The King was king and honoured as such, like a constitutional monarch; but instead of a Parliament, he had a council of soldiers, in whom power rested, and of whom he was in no degree a military commander. No Arabic or Persian names, forms or terms appear to have been introduced; but, on the contrary, English terms and modes of business were generally adopted. All petitions seem to have been presented to the King, but the great authority to which all of them on all matters were referred (by order endorsed on the petition), was the 'Court', a body composed of a number of colonels, a brigade major and a secretary. All the colonels, etc., were sepoys who had made their mark."[235]

Emperor Bahadur Shah had the right to attend the session of the Court.[236] No decision of the Court was enforceable in the state without the signature of the Emperor. If a resolution of the Court was disapproved by the Emperor, it was to be re-considered by the Court.[237] In actual practice, however, the Court resolved as it chose[238] and compelled the King to affix his seal thereon. In his defence statement submitted to the military commission especially appointed in 1858 to try him, Bahadur Shah

stated : "The mutinous soldiers had established a Court in which all matters were deliberated upon, and decisions taken. But I never took any part in their conferences.... As regards the orders under my seal and under my signatures, the facts are that from the day soldiery came and killed the European officers, and made me a prisoner, I remained so thereafter. They caused to be prepared papers they thought fit, brought them to me and compelled me to affix my seal. Sometimes they brought the rough draft orders and had their copies made by my secretary. While at others they brought letters in original intended for despatch, and left their copies in my office. Hence several rough drafts in many different hands have been filed in the proceedings. Frequently, they had my seal fixed on empty unaddressed envelopes. I neither knew the contents of the letters nor as to whom they were being sent....My life.... being in danger, I could not do anything in the matter.... They accused my servants....and Queen Zeenat Mahal of being in league with the British. They even threatened to kill them (the servants) and wanted me to hand over the Queen to them as a hostage."[239] On one occasion Bahadur Shah felt so "wearied and helpless that he resolved to relinquish the title of the Emperor, fraught with cares and troubles," and "pass the remaining days in service acceptable to the God."[240] Once he even threatened to commit suicide by swallowing a diamond.[241]

The Court held two kinds of sessions;[242] the ordinary session was held for five hours each day in the Red Fort; special sessions were held for the transaction of any urgent business at any time of the day or night.[243] The rebels must have recognized the necessity of unanimity and expedition, for they had provided for the process of guillotine to safeguard against frivolous proposals. Thus an amendment to a proposal could not be moved unless it was supported by four out of ten members, and the Court could always apply the guillotine after three speeches had been made, on the plea of urgency.[240] In all matters, a majority vote of the

Court was essential. But any decision taken in the absence of a member was applicable to his department[245] also. This implies joint responsibility.

To maintain secrecy, the *Parwanah*[246] ordained that the meetings of the Court would be *in camera*. Any disclosure, implicit or explicit, of its proceedings by any of the members was punishable by his removal from the Court. The same punishment was prescribed for any sort of deception towards the state, or for showing partiality towards a person or a body of persons.[247]

The procedure formulated by the rebels was neither comprehensive nor conformable with the parliamentary rules in any modern state. The rebels had no experience of parliamentary government, much less of drafting of procedural rules. All the same the underlying basis of the procedure seems to be the Panchayat system. It appears as if the Court was devised primarily to satisfy the democratic instinct of their own class whose socio-political organization has always been the traditional Panchayat.

A *Parwanah*[248] dated August 8, 1857, the only one of its kind available, gives us a clue to the nature of business transacted by the Court. This *Parwanah* was some kind of a summons to the members of the Court to attend a special meeting of the Court, the agenda for which included the problem of proper administration of the City of Delhi, better administration of supplies, more efficient upkeep of the army, better distribution of the *dak* and the raising of loans from the Mahajans. The Court also issued frequent orders and circulars on discipline in the army, the suppression of corrupt practices, abuse of authority and rapacity.[249]

Not only was the nature and extent of authority exercised by the Court wide and comprehensive; the Court was also not prepared to tolerate any encroachment upon its authority by extraneous influences. In military matters, for instance, neither the Emperor nor the royal princes had any effective voice. In a letter dated June 26, 1857, the Emperor complained to his son, Mirza Moghal[250]: "Formerly

some troopers took up quarters in the Hayat Baksh and Mehtab Gardens. Owing to the injury caused to these gardens through their stay, the troopers were made to quit on our orders. But now again nearly two hundred soldiers ....are staying....there; you are, therefore, directed to speak to the members of the Court and have them removed.' On another occasion, Bahadur Shah deplored that the army officers indulged in the "practice of coming into the Court carelessly dressed and in utter disregard to the forms of respect to the royalty.... They came galloping on their horses to places....which not even Nadir Shah, nor Ahmad Shah, nor any of the British Governor-Generals of India ever entered on horseback.... Do the army have the welfare of the State at heart?"[31] cried the last Moghul in despair.

The plight of the royal princes was even worse. They did not wield any influence at all. In fact, the hopes of the princely order were being frustrated at every step by the "headstrong" and "insolent" soldiery. Mirza Moghal, heir-apparent and Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army until the arrival of General Bakht Khan on July 1, 1857, wrote to Bahadur Shah: "Your Majesty is aware that before Bakht Khan came, active operations of war were carried on daily and without any let or hindrance....Today, when I went outside the city with my regiments to attack the enemy, he interposed and kept the whole force standing inactive. He wanted to know under whose orders they had been brought out, and commanded that they were not to proceed without his permission. (in the end) he forced us to return."[32]

The tussle which ensued between Mirza Moghal and General Bakht Khan, and which filtered down to their respective followers, was not merely personal bickering. In fact, the princely order could no longer place any confidence in the infantry.[33] The jealousy, strife and conflict between the heir-apparent and the revolutionary General were, beneath the surface, a struggle between the dying aristo-

cracy and the new force of peasant proprietors. It was, therefore, not at all surprising that the feudal barons began soon after to groan under the levelling attempted by the rebels, and lost much of their enthusiasm in the midst of the struggle. "The *Shahzadas*," writes the Rev. Cave-Browne, "began to feel their condition perilous and tried to open negotiations (with the British)."[254]

The Court of Administration was also the highest judicial authority. It established law courts, appointed judges, and regulated the judicial procedure for civil and criminal cases. The police officers as well as the civil servants were appointed by the Court, and were responsible to and could be removed by it.[255] It tried to eradicate bribery and corruption, and it did this with a heavy hand. The man in the street could appeal to the Court in all cases of alleged abuse of authority and oppression.[256]

In the sphere of finance, too, the Court was supreme. The revenue officials were appointed and could be removed by it alone.[257] It also enjoyed authority to collect land revenue and other taxes and levies.[258] None except the Court could raise loans on behalf of the state. Officials were required to forward immediately to the Court any *Parwanah* that they received from any other quarter for raising funds. They were also instructed not to arrest without the summons of the Court a person refusing to lend money.[259] Once when Mirza Sultan Khizr tried to raise funds on his own, the Court strongly protested and asked the Emperor to warn the princes against doing so.[260] The Emperor refused to give his assent to a suggestion made by Mirza Moghal that the officials of the royal household, instead of the agents of the Courts, should collect money, in spite of the Mirza's plea that it would help raise more funds.[261] He reminded the Mirza that the Court was the sole authority in that matter.[262]

It cannot be denied that the Court failed miserably in the matter of raising loans. The propertied classes appear to have been too frightened at the demand of the rebels

to advance them loans, or at their "innovation" to abolish landlordism.[263] On their part the peasant-soldiers were unable to entertain any idea of nationalization of land due to the nature of their class origin. The Mahajans refused to part with money except under duress. The wholesalers, and retailers, too, refused to sell their goods on credit to the new state which they were convinced was bankrupt and unstable.[264] They were not wholly unjustified in view of the fact that the Court had been unable to restore peace and order in the City.[265] Hoarding, profiteering and black-marketing reduced the people to misery. The Court did, it is true, make heroic efforts to save the state from economic ruin. It tried to fix and control prices.[266] But in the absence of rationing, assured supplies and a stable administration, price control did not and could not succeed.

Necessity forced the Court to heavy and arbitrary taxation. This cannot be denied, though, that the incidence of taxation fell almost entirely on the classes which could pay.[267] Tax measures left the man-in-the street untouched. On the contrary, the Court tried to give him relief. It passed orders for liquidating the zamindari system and giving proprietory right to the actual tiller.[268] It is evident from the orders passed by the Court that it had intended to overhaul the system of revenue assessment. Its authority was, however, too short-lived to accomplish the task.

A similar Court of Administration was set up in Lucknow. Like the Delhi rebels, the Lucknow insurgents crowned Birjis Qadr, a natural son of the ex-King of Oudh. On his elevation to the throne, or rather on his being created Nawab Vazir of Oudh—for his authority was subordinated to that of the Emperor of Delhi—his mother and Mammu Khan enjoyed power that was checked only by the caprice of the troops to whom their elevation was due.[269]

The real power was, in fact, vested in a minister and a Court of Administration.[270] The Court consisted of the King's principal servants, of the rajas and great landed proprietors of the area and the self-created high dignitaries

of the army. The Court deliberated upon how operations against the British were to be conducted. It had its own commander-in-chief, formerly, the commander-in-chief was Hishmat-ud-Dowlah, a brother-in-law of the ex-King. The Court had appointed generals of divisions, brigadiers and colonels, and had apparently, a well constituted and well regulated army.[271] In truth, however, the sepoys themselves elected their officers, and the officers their commanders—all in the name of the King. But if, as happened not infrequently, they happened to displease the gallant sepoys, a debating assembly would immediately be called by the privates, at the conclusion of which they would usually be degraded or executed.[272] Thus, the new dignitaries were not treated with respect, and they did not command that obedience which military officers are entitled to in a disciplined army. Their offices, except the very highest, were replete with danger.[273] The rebel troops paid no heed to their commanders, and did what they liked.[274]

VI. ROLE OF CLASSES

The upper classes were terrified at the growth of a democratic spirit among the soldiers, became suspicious of the results of the revolt, and lost their enthusiasm after the first flush of the rebellion was over.

The changing attitude of the upper classes during the rebellion, especially that of the talukdars, zamindars and sahukars, makes this clear During the first phase, which lasted approximately till the first of July, 1857, the date on which the Court of Administration was formed in Delhi, "backed by their retainers, the talukdars, rose almost to a man, forcibly ejected those upon whom their....estates had been bestowed."[275] Henry St-George Tucker, in a letter to the Governor-General described the situation thus: "All the large landholders and auction-purchasers are paralysed and dispossessed, their agents being frequently murdered and their property destroyed."[276]

But with the disappearance of British authority, the

concept of "freedom," too, began to take shape. The sepoys as well as the common people began occupying lands, "plundering" towns, and destroying government records and other deeds of property.[277] It was on one such occasion that Kunwar Singh, who led the rebels in Bihar, and was himself a big landlord, stopped his followers from indulging in such actions, on the plea that "otherwise, after the British were driven out of the country, there would be no proof of the rights of the people, and no evidence to determine the amount due from one party to the other."[278]

However, mostly the armed masses were lords of their respective areas, expropriating the rich at will.[279] Mark Thornhill writes that "every shop was completely plundered, and not only plundered but wrecked. The doors were torn out, the verandahs pulled down, the floor dug up, and also great holes dug in the walls. Whatever was worth carrying off had gone to the villages, the rest lay in the streets. The roads were covered with torn account books, broken bottles, fragments of jars and boxes besides the debris of the floor and verandahs."[280] All those who had anything to lose cursed the sepoys.[281] "The rebels were," Sir Syed Ahmad Khan remarked, "for the most part men who had nothing to lose, the governed not the governing class."[282] The upper classes, therefore, began to fear victory more than the defeat in the rebellion Victory, they thought, was more likely to bring about their complete extinction. "Most of them were shrewd enough to perceive that it would not answer their purpose to join the rebels."[283] After the second week of the siege of Lucknow the rebels "did not seem to have received further reinforcements from the talukdars of Oudh."[284]

It was due to the emergence of the common people as leaders of the rebellion that General Outram found as late as September 17, 1857, "a large and influential class in Oudh....among the most powerful and most of the middle classes of chiefs and zamindars who really desire the establishment of our rule."[285] Lt-General McLeod Innes firmly

believed that "the participation of most of them in the Mutiny had been more nominal than real."[286] While some of them preserved "armed neutrality,"[287] others "sent to the rebel camp only such contingents as were demanded and personally remained passive."[288] Still others "kept the British authorities informed of the movements of the Mutineers, and of their want of ammunition."[289] Some of the talukdars and Bannias even supplied the British armies with necessaries[290] and gave shelter to British fugitives.[291] Kaye writes: "Some powerful rajas, whose interest it was to maintain order, either sided with the English or maintained a discreet neutrality whilst the tumult was at its height."[292] Holmes records that "though of the whole body of influential landowners some unquestionably took an active part against us, a considerable number was passively loyal, and some few manfully threw themselves into the breach and exerted their influence to stem the rush of insurrection."[293] General Outram could not find any positive evidence that, before the issuing of the Canning proclamation of March 20, 1858, any talukdar took the field *in person* on the side of the rebels.[294]

In "marked contrast" with this conduct, however, the talukdars "rose *en masse* in rebellion after the publication of the Canning proclamation."[295] The proclamation had confiscated all lands of the province with the exception of those held by six specified persons and others who could prove to the satisfaction of the government that they had been loyal during the rebellion.[296] A "favourable" factor in this forced decision to revolt was that by then the rebels had been beaten at Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Banaras and Allahabad. The latter had also been weakened by internal dissensions and economic crisis. This eliminated the fear from the minds of the talukdars that the traditional economic and social structure would be affected if they associated intimately with the encroaching commoners against the British.

Realizing the dangerous consequences of the proclama-

tion, Sir George Campbell, a distinguished civilian, had advised the government against the implementation of the proclamation. Instead, he urged them to assure the talukdars that "bygones should be bygones," because won over by Sir Henry Lawrence's mild policy, some of them had sent supplies for the provisioning of the Residency at Lucknow, and had aided British fugitives after the rebellion in Oudh.[297] General Outram asked the Governor-General to treat the talukdars as "honourable enemies" and to guarantee them the possession of land. He warned Lord Canning that if nothing more than their lives and freedom from imprisonment were offered to the talukdars, they would be driven in despair to wage a guerilla war which would involve the loss of thousands of Europeans by battle, disease, and exposure; whereas if the possession of their lands was guaranteed to them, they would exert their influence to support the government in the restoration of order.[298] The situation was sufficiently serious to induce Lord Canning to accept General Outram's proposal for winning the feudal barons. He assured them a fair deal; the result was instantaneous. On October 22, 1858, when rebellion was still raging in Oudh, the *vakil* of the Begum of Oudh went to the British Commander in-Chief's camp to ask what terms she might expect All the rajas and talukdars who were still at large, had already despatched their agents on similar errands.[299]

After the revolt, therefore, "the talukdars not only recovered their estates, but they received, in many cases, extravagant privileges to which they themselves had no pretensions, and solemn promises that the privileges should be maintained were given by the Government."[300] After the rebellion about two-thirds of the land passed into the possession of big landlords[301] under the tenure which prevailed at the time of the annexation of Oudh.[302] This was the price of their betrayal of the revolt, that after the order of confiscation, the talukdars received, in fact, more than they had demanded before the rebellion. No wonder the British

army of occupation was "joyfully welcomed by the chief landlords and the respectable villagers."[303]

In Delhi, the tale was similar. After entering the Moghul capital and formally proclaiming Bahadur Shah the Emperor of India, the rebels took over the city "All is confusion and riot," was the terse report of Rajjab Ali, a British spy.[304] Nawab Moinuddin describes the scene as follows.[305] "They addressed the Emperor with such disrespectful terms as 'I say, you, King! I say, you, old man! (*Arre, Badshah! Arre, Buddhe*).' 'Listen,' cried one, catching him by hand. 'Listen to me,' said another, touching the old king's beard. Enraged at their behaviour, yet unable to prevent their insolence, the King found relief in bewailing before his servants his misfortunes and his fate. Those who had formerly been only too glad humbly to obey his orders were not ashamed to mock and humiliate him.[306] His Queen was threatened with arrest many times; his sons were made to play second fiddle, and the royal physician was actually imprisoned by the rebels.[307] Sick of all this, Bahadur Shah asked the sepoys to leave the city.[308] When these requests went unheeded, he decided to negotiate with the British, but found himself too helpless to do so. That was on July 24, 1857.[309] After that, he vacillated between the desire to become a *faqir*, and the desire to "resign the imperial power" into the hands of the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Alwar; he could rely on nobody "to organize and administer the very important affairs of the Empire."[310] When his request to the four rulers failed to solicit the necessary answer, "Bahadur Shah, Emperor of Hindustan, sent in (agents to British camp) to treat for terms."[311]

If such was the plight of the Emperor of India, the condition of the feudal and usurious classes in general can well be imagined. To put a stop to the destruction and plundering of their property they decided "to buy up a regiment by a monthly payment,"[312] later, raised a private police force to protect themselves from plunder and

violence.[313] Soon, however, the arrangements failed. On August 20, the bankers of the city decided to resist jointly further exactions of the sepoys.[314] Forced by starvation due to the refusal of shopkeepers to sell provisions for want of payment,[315] the sepoys began to indulge in unrestrained looting.[316] They even threatened to sack the city. Scores of bankers, merchants, former courtiers and princes were threatened by the sepoys in daily bids to extort money from them.[317]

The propertied classes abandoned willing cooperation with the sepoys. They helped under duress, and only to the extent necessary to save their lives and property. They buried their wealth,[318] and refused all supplies for want of payment.[319] On August 30, Dolali Mall, Chief of the Commissariat, reported that he was no longer able to serve out rations to the troops.[320] On the following day, Mulahi Lala Muthridi, a contractor, petitioned that no more sulphur could be purchased and the manufacture of gunpowder, therefore, must cease.[321] The upper classes were convinced that "the Mutineers who were laden with looted wealth could neither leave the city, nor protect it."[322] They stayed only to enrich themselves.[323] Thus "the awful misery of warfare and the ghastly destitution of anarchy were fully felt by the population—shopkeepers, retail traders" and other rich classes.[324] "From a Mohammedan correspondent," wrote Frederick Cooper, "we are informed of the enormous exertion which Muftee Sadder-ud-din....Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan, Mirza Elahi Baksh and Begum Zeenat Mahal are prepared to make to make up with the English Government.... The mercy of the Government is particularly asked for the King, the nobles and the citizens of Delhi who are innocent and helpless."[325]

The story was repeated in Bengal. The zamindars remained actively loyal to the English. The reason for their loyalty is easy to understand. During the rebellion, the peasantry of Bihar (which then formed a part of the Bengal Presidency) came out openly not only against the Bri-

tish, but also against the zamindars and their agents. The memorial submitted by the Bengal zamindars in December 1857, to the Governor-General states that "so essentially have they identified their interests with the rulers, that. . . (they) have in every part of the scene of the mutinies been exposed to the same cruelty, which mutineers and their misguided countrymen have displayed towards the British within their reach."[326]

In the villages and towns in affected areas, the shrewd traders and the avaricious money-lenders, who had grown fat under the British land and legal systems, helped the Company's government as long as they could do so; they helped the mutineers only when evasion was impossible.[327] They thought that the victory of the rebels would mean the restoration of the old village economy in which they had no place.[328] They, therefore, longed for the restoration of "law and order," and for the resumption of the "ordinary routine of trade." This was possible only under British rule. Thornhill's remark that "with the exception of Bannias, who suffered by it, all classes enjoyed the confusion"[329] succinctly sums up the situation. Kaye found "much sincerity" in the professions of delight on the part of the trading classes, "who commonly lost more than they gained by these convulsions."[330]

The merchants and bankers in the coastal and unaffected areas actively supported the British. They had heard about the expropriation of the property of their own class in the "liberated" areas several times in a short period. They were certain that the success of the rebellion, whether under the banner of feudal barons or of the rebellious soldiery and the pauperized peasantry, would mean their own extinction economically. "The bannias. . . .and native contractors, never lost their confidence in the power of (the Company's Government) but always said—'Sahib, it is but a little while, and these rebels will bite the dust (literally eat dirt), for the Company is Almighty."[331] According to Holmes, "the mercantile and shopkeeping classes. . . .who knew that their

position and prosperity were staked upon the continuance of orderly rule, and would be liable to ruin amid the anarchy which would be sure to follow upon its subversion, were steady, if not loyal supporters of the Government....”[332] They shut their ears against rumours about the fall of British rule in India,[333] vied with each other in the loyalty of their addresses and offers of service.[334]

The Parsees, who were mostly traders, helped the British for another reason also. “If they are rich,” writes Thomas Lowe, “they owe it to no Hindu or Mussalman.... if they lean more to the British than any other race in the land it is because British justice and equable laws protect them from the rapine and persecution they have so often suffered under other powers.... In the last Mutiny they suffered equally with the Europeans at the hands of the Mutineers, and in many cases worse.... Through these merchants, we obtained all that was necessary for the march.”[335]

Indians who had been taught English and native officials generally took no part in the revolt. While the former remained “invariably loyal”[336] to the British, the latter “stood gallantly” at their post[337] throughout the crisis. Their disapproval was based on self-interest. They knew that if the *Badshah Hakumat*[338] were re-established they would be thrown out. Being ignorant of Persian, innocent of eastern customs and of a non-aristocratic origin, they would not find any place in the social and political set up.

The rebellion was crushed within the short time of two years. It was crushed so easily because of betrayal by the propertied classes. To save their class interests, they committed suicide as a free people. None of the ruling princes joined the revolt—because Lord Canning had solemnly guaranteed their right of adoption in perpetuity.[339] Of the rajahs and ranis, only Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi laid down her life against the British, though she took the field against the British in March 1858,—only after she had failed to convince them that she was in no way connected with the uprising or

massacre at Jhansi."[40] Bahadur Shah fought under compulsion; Nana Sahib took the field against the British only as a prisoner in the hands of the soldiery."[41] The zamindars, both of the British and pre-British times, the merchants and the money-lenders, the educated middle class and the native officials—all sided with the British or observed sullen neutrality as demanded by the circumstances in which they were caught. All looked to the British as saviours at a time when the Indian peasantry was fighting desperately to free itself of foreign as well as feudal bondage. Thus, though originally organized to restore the old, outmoded and pre-British economy, "which had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism," [42] the rebellion ended as a peasant war against indigenous landlordism and foreign imperialism.

VII. CAUSES OF FAILURE

There were, however, other causes, besides betrayal by the propertied classes which contributed to the defeat of the rebels in India's fight for political economic freedom. Strangely enough, the rebellion failed to throw up a single military leader of ability. This becomes obvious when one compares the dogged resistance put up by the British at Lucknow with that of the rebels at Delhi, Jhansi or Gwalior. Doubtless, the Indians, too, gained some notable victories. But these were, it could be said, due to their superior numbers than to better strategy or tactics. Sir John Lawrence has rightly remarked that "had a single leader of ability arisen among them (rebels) ....we must have been lost beyond redemption."[43] Moreover, when the rebellion broke out, the Crimean War and the war with Persia were over, and the British army was in good form. A new treaty of friendship had been signed with Afghanistan. The Russian threat from beyond the Khyber Pass was, therefore, not immediate. The British were free to deal with the Indian revolt.

There was another factor which the rebels had not been

reckoned with: that England would declare war against China. Considerable European forces, for deployment in that country sailed through the Indian ocean, within hailing distance of Calcutta. "To this fortuitous circumstances, under God's providence, was due the early re-establishment of British authority in North-Western India."[344]

The rebels not only suffered from perpetual financial stringency[345] but were also short of war equipment.[346] Major General Sir Owen Tudor Burne noted that the Oudh rebels had insufficient arms. They had 684 cannons, 186,177 muskets, 561,321 swords, 50,311 spears and 638,683 minor weapons. A great proportion of the wounds were, in fact, inflicted by sabre.[347] A *talwar* was surely no match against an Enfield rifle! Charles Ball claims that if the rebel army of Bengal had held "the Minie rifle in their hands, Delhi might still have belonged to the Moghals; and in the place of a wretched charpoy in a prison chamber, the descedant of Timur might even now be sitting upon the crystal throne in the palace of his ancestors."[348]

In addition to the Enfield rifle, there was the telegraph —another modern invention pitted against the rebels. According to Russell, "never since its discovery has the electric telegraph played so important and daring a role as it now does in India. Without it the Commander-in-Chief would lose the effect of half his force. It has served him better than his right arm."[349]

Moreover, in the absence of a compact organization such a revolt could not succeed. The leaders of the revolt were a motley crowd: dispossessed landlords, uprooted artisans, impoverished peasants, disgruntled sepoys and fanatical priests, having different concepts of free India. The inchoate aspirations of the leaders were embodied in the Court of Administration and a system of government which was no more than a magnified village panchayat. (This was, after all, their only political heritage.) True, the socio-economic content of the new state was in the direction of instituting peasant proprietorship.[350] But even if the

rebels had succeeded, the new state, in spite of its elected Court of Administration, would have, in time, relapsed into the old monarchical system. This becomes almost certain when we recall that General Bakht Khan, the rebel leader of Delhi, had assumed the title of "Lord Governor Bahadur, Controller of all Matters, Civil and Military."[351] This interpretation is supported by the fact that the revolt was caused not by a revolutionary technological change in the means of production, necessitating a readjustment in the established social relationship and demanding a new system of government, but merely by the dissolution of the old social order without the birth of a new one.

VIII. SOME EFFECTS

Although the rebellion was suppressed within two years, its effects were long lasting and widespread. "There came over the British Government and its officers," observes Sir John Strachey, "a flood of reactionary opinions."[352] Because the princes had rendered signal services by acting as the breakwaters to the storm, "to preserve them as a bulwark of the Empire has ever since been a principle of British policy," noted P. E. Roberts, an English historian.[353] Queen Victoria's proclamation, on becoming the Empress of India, read thus: "We hereby announce to the native princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained and we look for like observance on their part .... We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own...."[354]

The revolt also led to an "alliance" between the Indian landlords, moneylenders and the British, who thought it would be difficult for them to rule permanently if they adopted policies "by which the better classes of the natives of Hindustan would remain alienated from us."[355] The Queen's proclamation stated therefore: "We know, and

respect, the feeling of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith....and in framing and administering the law, due regard (will) be paid to the ancient rights, usage and customs of India."[356] The Government of India suggested to London in November 1859, that "the maintenance of a landed aristocracy in India where none existed, is an object of such importance that we may well afford to sacrifice to it something of a system which, while it has increased the independence and protected the rights of the cultivators of the soil, has led to the exhaustion or decay of the old nobility."[357] It was in pursuance of this policy that two-thirds of the talukdars of Oudh, whom Canning had contemptuously described as "men distinguished neither by birth, good service or connection with soil," were rehabilitated "as a necessary element in the social constitution of the provinces."[358] More. Between 1858 and 1862 the proposal for extending the zamindari settlement was subjected to heated debate by the British. The proposal was finally dropped because of the financial troubles which had been caused by the revolt.[359] But this "alliance" between Indian landlords and British imperialists pushed India into an agrarian crisis whose effects have still to be fully wiped out.

From the economic and political planes, the "alliance" extended its influence to the social and cultural planes. The policy of changing the "squares of obsolete tradition for the rounds of civilized enlightenment"[360] was abandoned. "A nervous fear," wrote Sir Henry Maine, "of altering native customs has, ever since the terrible events of 1857, taken possession of Indian administrators."[361] The British in India began jealously to guard and preserve the social and religious survivals against the demands of the progressive, rising middle class in respect of age of marriage, legislation against untouchability, divorce among Hindus, and the right of inheritance to Hindu women.

The army and the Muslims were regarded by the Bri-

tish as the chief instigators of the revolt. They therefore received special attention. The Peel Commission (1858) recommended the reduction of the native army, and nearly 200,000 men, including some from the military police, were disbanded. Another Army Commission which was appointed 21 years later drew two lessons from the revolt : First, of retaining in the country an "irresistible force of British troops," and secondly, "of keeping the artillery in the hands of Europeans." Lord Canning, who was regarded in England as "pro-nigger," and derided for his "clemency,"[362] recommended that no European soldier should be allowed to stay in India long enough to forget that he belonged to an army of occupation. His suggestion was incorporated in the Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1861.[363] Similarly, principal treasuries, big arsenals, strategic positions and key fortresses and military positions were, from now on, guarded by European troops whose number was "enough.... to hold their own, even in the event of a Mutiny."[364]

The Muslims, too, felt the wrath of the British. They were accused by the latter of taking a leading part in the rebellion.[365] "To teach these rascally Mussalmans a lesson," the Nawabs of Jhajjar, Ballabhgarh, Furrukhnagar, and twenty-four shahzadas were hanged.[366] Muslim property was either confiscated or destroyed. While Muslims were made to pay 35 per cent of their immovable property as punitive fine, Hindus were let off with only 10 per cent. After Delhi was re-conquered the Hindus were allowed to return within a few months, but the Muslims could not, before 1859. C. F. Andrew observes in his *Zakaullah of Delhi* that "decay immediately overtook the revival of learning in Delhi, from which it never recovered."[367]

The story was the same in other places and provinces.

The Muslims continued their struggle against the British —if not openly, then in daily antipathies. These took the form, collectively, of antagonism to British culture and civilization, philosophy and education, everything British. Thus in the post-rebellion period "while....Hindus....in-

spired by the arts and sciences of Europe, were experiencing an intellectual and moral renaissance," wrote Sir Theodore Morrison, "the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay."[368]

The result was that "the proportion of the (Muslim) race which a century ago had the monopoly of government, has now fallen to less than one-twenty-third of the whole administrative body. This, too, in the gazetted appointments, where the distribution of patronage is closely watched. In less conspicuous office establishments...., the exclusion of Musalmans is even more complete."[369] By the time they realised the cost of such an attitude, (in the writings of men like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan), the Hindus had taken long strides in education and had entrenched themselves in government services and business—the only avenues open to the educated classes This uneven development of the two communities raised the Hindu-Moslem problem. It was later to distort India's struggle for national independence. Encouraged and exploited by the British, this development eventually led to the creation of Pakistan.

British territorial expansion in India practically ceased after the rebellion, and the era of imperialist consolidation set in. Sir John Seeley said that "about the time of the Mutiny, annexation almost ceased and yet the quarter of the century in which no conquests have been made has been the period of a rapid growth in trade."[370] According to Asoka Mehta trade expanded by nearly 360 per cent.[371]

This expansion was due to the opening up of interior markets by means of a network of railways and roads, to capital investment. But "you cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country," wrote Marx, "without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of it there must grow branches of industry not immediately connected with railways. (It) will ... dissolve ... the hereditary divisions of labour, upon which rest the Indian castes—those impediments to Indian progress and

Indian power."[372] Thus, England though "actuated only by the vilest interests," became "the conscious tool of history" in bringing about "the greatest, and to speak the truth, the *only social* revolution ever heard of in Asia."[373] But, observed Marx, "the Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British... till the Indians themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether."[374] It was on the realization of this truth that the Indians began their organized struggle for independence in 1886. Sixty-one years later, on August 15, 1947, they won their freedom.

NOTES

1 The word "Mutiny" is used because of the currency it has gained. I do not regard this event as "Mutiny." —*T.K.*

2 Sir John William Kaye, Col. G. B. Malleson and a host of other British writers have written books about the rebellion of 1857 under this title.

3 Sir John Seeley, quoted by Asoka Mehta, *The Great Rebellion*, (1946), p. 39.

4 V. D. Savarkar, *India's War of Independence*, (1946).

5 English people.

6 G. W. Forrest, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, (1904), vol. I, p. 217 .

7 *Oxford History of India*, p. 722.

8 Sir W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India in the Year* 1858-59, (1860), vol. II, p. 259.

9 Sir George Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, (1893), vol. I, p. 283.

Lord Ellenborough observed in British Parliament on February 16, 1858, as follows: "...though our historians are so fond of asserting that the Mutiny was... purely a sedition, our action in hanging many thousands of citizens after travesties of trial or none at all, and burning villages of friends as well as foes, with any race but Indian, would have turned the Mutiny in a general rising of the population." Quoted by Edward Thompson, *The Other Side of the Medal*, (1930), p. 107.

10 Thomas Lowe, *Central India During the Rebellion of 1857 and 1858*, (1860), p. 24.
11 Sir G. O. Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah*, (1860), p. 45.
12 Reverend Dr. Alexander Duff, *The Indian Rebellion: Its Causes and Results in a Series of Letters*, (1858), p. 233.
13 Charles Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*. (No Date), vol. II, p. 572.
14 Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India*, (4th ed., 1878), vol. II, p. 195.
15 Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, (1880), vol. III, p. 487.
16 Rev. J. Cave-Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, (1861), vol. I, p. 28-29.

Author of *The Lost Dominion* concurs with the Reverend. He observes: "All that is necessary is to remark that the Mutiny was in no sense a national revolt, except in Oudh... " Quoted by Edward Thompson, *op. cit.*, p 307.

According to Lt.-General McLeod Innes "at least, the struggle of the Oudhians must be characterized as a war of independence." Quoted by Savarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 357; see also John Bruce Norton, *Topics for Indian Statesmen*, (1858), ch. ii. and Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

17 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 193.
18 Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
19 R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, vol. II, (7th ed. 1950), p. 223

Disraeli thought "that the mutineers of the Bengal Army were not so much avengers of professional grievances as the exponents of general discontent." Quoted by Edward Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

20 Mark Thornhill, *The Personal Adventures and Experiences of a Magistrate During the Rise, Progress and Suppression of the Indian Mutiny*, (1884), p. 178.
21 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Kaye: *Kaye's Mutiny Papers*, vol. 725, pp. 1011-16.
22 See below sections IV, V and VI, of the article.
23 Asoka Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
24 Rev. Dr. Frank Bright in his *History of England*, period IV, (1893) writes about atrocities committed by the Indian rebels and British soldiers thus: "The contest seemed to lie between two savage races, capable of no thought but that, regardless of all justice or mercy, their enemies should be exterminated" (p. 328). Marx justified however, the barbarities of the Indian rebels. He remarked: "However infamous the conduct of the sepoys, it is only the reflex, in a concerted form, of England's own conduct in India, not only during the epoch of the foundation of her Eastern Empire, but even during the last ten years of long-settled rule (*Marx and Engels on Britain*, p. 449).

25 Joan Beauchamp, *British Imperialism in India*, (1935), p. 17; also see R. Palme Dutt, *Modern India*, (1927), p. 31.
26 William Bolts described the situation thus: "...the dominions in Asia, like the distant Roman provinces, during the decline of that empire, have been abandoned as lawful prey, to every species of speculators; insomuch that many of the servants of the company after exhibiting such scenes of barbarity as can scarcely be paralleled in the history of any country, have returned to England loaded with wealth;...." (*Considerations on Indian Affairs*, (1772), Preface).

For an interesting study on the subject see James H. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England* (1926): *passim.*
27 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (1930 ed.), book. IV, ch. vii.
28 Bolts, *op. cit.*, Preface.
29 T. Rice Holmes, *A History of the Indian Rebellion*, (5th ed., 1898), p. 6.
30 Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, pp. 835-36.
31 Brooks Adams, *The Laws of Civilization and Decay*, p. 260.
32 Queen Elizabeth I's Charter to the East India Company. Quoted by Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, (1945), p. 279.
33 Marx, *Articles on India*, (2nd Indian ed., 1945), pp. 43-44.
34 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
35 James Mill, *History of British India*. (H.H. Wilson's Continuation), book. I, ch. viii, etc.
36 Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, ch. xv, sec. 5.
37 Marx, *Articles on India*, p. 22.
38 Prof. D. R. Gadgil in his celebrated work *Industrial Evolution of India* observes: "The decay of urban industry, certainly heightened the pressure on land, not so much by an active migration from the cities ... (not that this was entirely absent), but by retaining people on land, who would, otherwise, have been in due course absorbed into the urban industries" (p. 45).
39 Wadia and Merchant, *op cit.*, p. 279.
40 Radhakamal Mukherjee, *Land Problems of India*, (1933), pp. 16 and 41; also see Strachey, *India: Its Administration and Progress*, (4th ed., 1911), pp. 137, 365.
41 R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 85.
42 Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
43 *Ibid.* p. 427

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan also is generally of Sir John's view. He observes: "Under former rulers, in old times, the system of buying and selling rights in landed property, of mortgage, and of transfer by gift, undoubtedly prevailed. But there was little of it, and what little there was, was due to the consent and wishes of the parties concerned. To arbitrarily compel the sale of these rights in satisfaction of arrears of revenue, or of debt, was a practice in those days unknown." (*The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, (Urdu, ed., 1858), pp. 27-28.

44 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.
45 *Ibid.*, p. 34. For elucidation of this point see Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 427; also Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30.
46 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
47 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 260.
48 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 34; William Edwards, *Personal Adventure in the Indian Rebellion*, (2nd ed., 1858), pp. 11-13.
49 Arthur Mills, *India*, (1858), p. 108.
50 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 157.
51 *Cornwallis Correspondence*: Lord Cornwallis to the Court of Directors, p. 533. The Board of Control rightly designated him as "the greatest creator of private property in land." Quoted by Ramsay Muir, *The Making of British India*, (1923), p. 253.
52 Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Times in India*, (1882), p. 30.
53 *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p. 253.
54 Arthur Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
55 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
56 Report of the Collector of Midnapore in 1802. Quoted by R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, (Revised ed. 1947), p. 191.
57 Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
58 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
59 Minutes of the Madras Board of Revenue, January 5. 1818. Quoted by R. P. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
60 Quoted by R. P Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-6.
61 Bishop Heber's *Memoirs and Correspondence*, (1830), vol. II p 413 When he asked an intelligent Indian if he would wish to become a British subject, the reply was, "of all misfortunes keep me from that."
62 Lt.-General McLeod Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt*, (1857), p. 26. Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
63 Innes, *Ibid.*, p. 27; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
64 M. R. Gubbins, *An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh and of the Siege of Lucknow Presidency*, (2nd ed. 1858), p. 70.
65 *Ibid.*, p. 70; L. C Ruutz Rees, *A Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow*, (1858), pp. 33-34.
66 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
67 *Ibid.*, 70.
68 Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.
69 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
70 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
71 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 114; Innes, *op. cit.*, p 28.
72 *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 137-8.
73 Col. Sleeman's *Diary*. Quoted by Kaye, *Ibid.*, p. 13[illegible].
74 Kaye, *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 114-115; Innes *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29
75 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
76 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
77 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 114.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 154.
79 G. B. Seton Karr's Memorial to the Governor-General. Quoted by Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 17; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
80 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 177-178
81 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
82 Kaye, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
83 Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 162. Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
84 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
85 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 332.
86 Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30.
87 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
Marx has written as follows:
"The original class of zamindars... soon melted away under the pressure of the Company, in order to be replaced by mercantile speculators who now hold all the land in Bengal, with the exception of the estates returned under the direct management of the Government" (*Articles on India*, (Indian ed., 1943), p. 18.).
88 Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 177-78.
89 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
90 Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
91 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 126-7.
92 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
93 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Michael Joyce, *Ordeal at Lucknow*, (1938), p. 47.
94 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 27.
95 Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
96 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 180.
97 Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 348-9.
98 Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
99 *Ibid.*, p. 36; Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
100 Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
101 *Ibid.*, p. 26
102 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
103 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 197.
104 *Ibid.*, p. 196.
105 *Ibid.*, p. 196.
106 Lowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-8.
107 *Ibid.*, p. 358.
108 Prof. Thomas, *Economic History Review*, (1933).
109 *Ibid.*; Asoka Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
110 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 274. See also A. L. Morton's *A People's History of England*, (1945), p. 45.
Personally, I regard these reverses of as great an importance as the defeat of Russia at the hands of Japanese in 1905.—*T.K*
111 Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
112 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 341.
113 *Ibid.*, p. 343.
114 *Ibid.*, pp. 277, 310:

It was on the walls of the Juma Masjid (Delhi) that some versifier wrote the lines of which the following is a rough translation:

When war is nigh, and battle is sighted,
God and the soldier is all the cry;
When battle ends in victory,
God is forgotten, and the soldier slighted.

Sir T. Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny at Delhi*, (1898), p. 23.

115 Bundle 194, Fol. no. 30. *Parwanah* of the rebels giving details of their grievances against the British and appealing to their countrymen to revolt. (Vide *Press List of Mutiny Papers*, Imperial Record Office, Calcutta, 1921).
116 Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.
117 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
118 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
119 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
120 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
121 Quoted by Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 10.
122 Quoted by Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 136.
123 *Ibid.*, p. 165.
124 Henry S. Cunningham, *Earl Canning*, (4th ed., 1899), pp. 36-37.
125 John Bruce Norton writes: "....there was disaffection enough in the land for half a dozen rebellions...." (*The Rebellion in India: How to Prevent Another?* (1857), pp. 6-7).
126 Field Marshal Lord Roberts admits: "The recent researches of Mr. Forrest in the records of the Government of India prove that the lubricating mixture used in preparing the cartridges was actually composed of the objectionable ingredients, cows' fat and lard and that incredible disregard of the soldiers' prejudices was displayed in the manufacture of these cartridges." (*Forty-one Years in India*, (One-vol. ed, 1908), p. 431).
127 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
128 Anon, (1858), p. 4.
129 Trevelyan, *Cawnpore*, (1899).
130 Lt.-General T. F. Wilson, *Defence of Lucknow*, (1858); Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 109.
131 Savarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.
132 *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91, Sir T. Metcalfe, *op. cit.*
133 *Narrative of the Indian Mutiny*, p. 5; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 365.
134 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
135 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
136 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
137 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 638*n*.
138 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 273.
139 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
140 *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, (1895), p. 160.
141 Lord Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

142 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 40.
143 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
144 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
145 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 565.
Sir C. Aitchison in his *Lord Lawrence* (1893) remarks: "In this instance we could not play the Mohammedan against the Hindu" (p. 77). See also Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 273.
146 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
147 Bundle 199, Fol. 137, (Urdu), dated July 10, 1857.
148 Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 292.
149 Kaye, op. cit., vol. I, p. 579 n.
150 Metcalfe, op. cit., p. 39.
151 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 653.
152 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
153 Lord Roberts, op. cit., pp. 428-29.
154 Kaye, op. cit., vol. II, p. 109.
155 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 546.
156 Kaye, op. cit., vol II, p. 113; Anderson and Subedar, The *Last Days of the Company*, (1918), vol. I, p. 113.
157 John Bruce Norton, *Topics for Indian Statesmen*, (1858), ch. ii, *passim*.
158 Thornhill, op. cit., p. 178; also see Cave-Browne, op. cit., vol. I, p. 192.
159 Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
160 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
161 Forrest, op. cit., vol. I, p. 217.
162 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 143; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
163 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
164 *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 411-412.
165 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 411.
166 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
167 Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt*, (1897), p. 61.
168 Tatya Tope in his evidence before the Court Martial said that the Nana acted under compulsion. He was "a prisoner in the hands of the rebels."
See Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 420; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 310; Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 515. Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
When Tatya Tope made that statement, there was no reason for him to belittle his own or his master's role in the rebellion. On the contrary, there was every temptation to exaggerate their part in order to become immortal national heroes.
169 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 518.
170 Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
171 Even a cursory glance at the Political Proceedings, No. 280, dated December 30, 1859, will convince any impartial student of history that the Rani took the field against the British in March, 1858, and that, too, when the British finally refused to accept her professions of loyalty.
Also see Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 370.

172 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 209; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 200.
173 *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 244.
174 *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 98ff. He too fought under compulsion See *Patna University Journal*, viii (1954).
175 *Oxford History of India.*
176 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 86.
177 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
178 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
179 *Ibid.*, pp. 240, 352. Also see Frederick Cooper, *The Crisis in the Punjab* (1858), pp. 208, 212.
180 Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
181 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
182 Quoted by Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
183 Innes, op. cit., p. 28; and Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
184 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 500.
185 Quoted by P. E. Roberts, *India*, vol. II, p. 388
186 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
187 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
188 Aitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
189 Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, (1953), p. 83.
190 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 61.
191 Landlord.
192 Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 172
193 Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 311;
Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 59-61;
Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 333-34, 344-46.
194 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
195 Kaye, *op cit*, vol. II, p. 472 n.
196 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol I, p. 296; Also see Metcalfe, *op. cit.* p. 167.
197 Cooper, pp. 64, 154-55; Also see *The Hero of Delhi*, (1948), pp. 171-209; R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, vol. II, (7th ed. 1950), p. 90.
198 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 336.
199 *Ibid.*, p. 336.
200 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 281-82.
201 *Ibid.*, p. 286; Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-64
202 Khan, *op. cit*, p. 54.
203 Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
204 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 492.
205 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 311.
206 *Ibid.*, p. 33; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 421.
207 Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 171.
208 R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, (1883), vol. I, p 341.
209 Forrest, *op. cit*, vol. I, p. 171; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
210 *Ibid.*, p. 311.
211 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 436.
212 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

213 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 282.
214 Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
215 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 59.
216 R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 80.
217 Aitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
Although the crusading spirit of the Sikhs slumbered, it was by no means dead. There were Sikh regiments fighting on the side of the rebels in Delhi. See Metcalfe, op. cit., pp. 183, 199.
218 Forrest, *op. cit.*, vol I, p. 420; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
219 A Proclamation issued by a Moghul Prince stating the aims of the rebels. Quoted by Asoka Mehta, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-31.
220 *Calcutta Review*, 1858, p. 64.
221 Bundle 57, Foll. no. 539-41 (Urdu), dt. nil.
222 Their own words, *Ibid.*, rule no. 7.
223 Indigenous bankers, moneylenders or workers.
224 op. cit., preamble.
225 Bundle 153, Fo. 12 (Persian), August 19, 1857.
226 Bundle 57, Fo. 539-41, rule no. 2.
227 *Ibid.*, rule no. 24.
228 *Ibid.*, rule no. 4.
229 *Ibid.*, rule no. 5.
230 loc. cit.
231 Their own words, *Ibid.*, rule no. 3.
232 Their own words, loc. cit.
233 *Ibid.*, rule no. 11.
234 loc. cit.
235 Campbell, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 356.
236 Bundle 57, Fo. 539-41 (Urdu), rule no. 8.
237 *Ibid.*, rule no. 7.
238 *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, (1895), pp. 137-140. Prince Zaheeh-ud-Din alias Mirza Moghal wrote to the Emperor that he had a talk with General Bakht Khan and other members of the Court, but they refused to accept His Majesty's proposals. Bundle 199, Fo. 156 (Persian), dt. nil.
239 *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, Ex-King's Defence Statement, p. 137-140.
240 *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, vol. 19, no. 21, May 24, 1857. Also, *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, pp. 134-135, quoted in full in a letter from the King to Mirza Moghal, dt. nil.
241 Bundle 199, Fo. 260 (Persian), August 9, 1857.
242 Bundle 57, Fo. nos. 539-41 (Urdu), rule no. 3, dt. nil.
243 loc. cit.
244 *Ibid.*, rule nos. 8, 9 and 10.
245 *Ibid.*, rule no. 8
246 *Ibid.*, rule nos. 4, 8.
247 *Ibid.*, rule nos. 4, 6.
248 Bundle 57, Fo. no. 285 (Urdu), August 8, 1857.
249 *Ibid.*, Fo. nos 9, 120 and 276 (Urdu), dt. 13 and 14 July and 8 August, 1857, respectively; also see Bundle 57, Fo. no. 56 (Urdu), July 3, 1857.

250 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 195 (Persian), July 23, 1857
251 *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, pp. 134-35. Copy of an order from the King to Mirza Moghal, dt. nil.
252 *Ibid.*, Fo. no. 185 (Persian), August 7 1857
253 *Ibid.*, Fo. no. 49 (Persian), August 7, 1857.
254 Cove-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 140.

H. H. Greathed in his *Letters Written During the Siege of Delhi*, (1858), writes on August 9, 1857: "I am beginning to get letters from the princes. They declare they have been all along fondly attached to us and that they only want to know what they can do for us" (pp. 205-6).

King Bahadur Shah, it may be remembered, addressed a letter to the Lt.-Governor of Agra on May 11, 1857, informing him of the arrival of the rebels from Meerut. On July, 4, 1857, General T. Reed, commander-in-chief of the British besieging force at Delhi, wrote to Sir John Lawrence, chief commissioner, Punjab, informing him that if "we would guarantee his (King's) life and pension, he would open the gates (of the City or Red Fort) for us."

Zeenat Mahal, the favourite wife of the King, offered "to exercise her influence with the King, to bring about some arrangement" (Greathed, *op. cit.*, p. 217).

255 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 137 (Urdu), July 20, 1857; Petition of the members of the Court to the King.
256 *Ibid.*
257 Bundle 129, Fo. no. 6 (Urdu), August 18, 1857.
258 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 137 (Urdu), July 10, 1857.
259 Bundle 129, Fo. no. 61 (Urdu), August 8, 1857.
260 Bundle 153, Fo. no. 17 (Persian), dt. nil, Bundle 57, Fo. no. 532 (Persian), August 19, 1857.
261 Bundle 153, Fo. no. 16 (Persian), dt. nil.
262 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 248 (Persian), August 6, 1857
263 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 137 (Urdu), July 10, 1857. It reads as follows: "If on inspection of the documents, and on the testimony of their witnesses, viz, the *Kanungo* (Registrar of Landed Rights), the *Patwari* (Village Accountant), and other respectable men of the place, it shall be clearly proved that the claimant had really been the land-holder....the settlement will be made in his favour."
264 Bundle 106, Fo no. 20 (Urdu), June 6, 1857; also Bundle 126, Fo. no. 20 (Urdu), June 1, 1857.
265 Bundle 40, Fo. no 297 (Urdu), August 9, 1857.
266 Bundle 129, Fo. nos. 42, 49, 57, 79, 85, 100, 101 and 102 of various dates; also Bundle 130, Fo. nos. 5, 9, 17, 22, 25, 35, 55, 61, 67, 86, 90, 120, 121, 125, 150, 158, 171 182, 188, 201 and 202 of various dates.
267 Bundle 153, Fo. no. 6 (Persian), July 28, 1857.
268 See footnote 261.
269 Capt. G. Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Mutinies in Oudh* (1859),

p. 161; Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 261. Hutchinson gives the names of the following five members of the Lucknow Court of Administration: (i) Capt. Raghunath Singh, (ii) Capt. Umrao Singh, (iii) Capt. Imdad Hussein; (iv) Darogha Wajid Ali; and (v) Mammu Khan Sharf-ud-Dowlah. (p. 160).
270 Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
271 J. Talboys Wheeles, *India Under British Rule*, (1886), p. 265.
272 Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-3.
273 *Ibid.*, pp. 262-3.
274 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
275 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
276 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 233-34.
277 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
278 *Arya Kirti* by Rajani Gupta of Bengal. Quoted by Savarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 435.
279 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 352; Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7; Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
280 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
281 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 353.
282 Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
283 Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
284 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
285 General Sir James Outram. *Orders, Despatches and Correspondence*, (1859), p. 297.
286 Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
287 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 265.
288 Lt.-Gen. Innes *Lucknow and Oudh in Mutiny*, (1896), p. 293.
289 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 130
290 Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt* p. ii ; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
291 All "personal narratives" are full of such references. According to Gubbins, "there is only one instance of treachery....which we came across" (*op. cit.*, p. 140).
292 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 260.
293 Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 143, 260.
294 Quoted by Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 626.
295 Innes, *Lucknow and Oudh in Mutiny*, pp. 291-93.
296 Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 409.
297 George Campbell, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 14; Bosworth Smith, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 176, 191, 193-95; Innes, *The sepoy Revolt*, pp. 244-45
298 Quoted by Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 447; Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol III, p. 251. The proclamation was disapproved by Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control. See Cunningham, *op. cit.*, Ch. VII, *passim*.
299 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 533.
300 Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
301 *Ibid.*, p. 382.
302 Sykes, *Compendium of the Laws, especially relating to the Taluqdars of Oudh*, pp. 382-83.

303 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 434; Kaye *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 391. Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the N. W. Provinces of India*, (1858), pp. 156ff.
304 Quoted by Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 37.
305 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
306 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
307 *Ibid.*, p. 93; Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
308 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-94.
309 *Ibid.*, pp. 165 and 178.
310 *Ibid.*, p. 220; Holmes *op. cit.*, p. 354.
311 Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol II, p. 39. See footnote 252.
312 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
313 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
314 *Ibid.*, p. 202.
315 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
316 *Ibid.*, p. 216.
317 *Ibid.*, *passim.*
318 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
319 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
320 *Ibid.*, p. 213.
321 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
322 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
323 *loc. cit.*
324 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
325 *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.
326 Asoka Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 458.
327 Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 163, 170, 188, 252 and 261.
328 For reasons see Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 427.
329 Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
330 Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 391; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
331 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
332 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 45; Kaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 117; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p. 108; Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
333 Holmes, *op. cit.* p. 170.
334 *Ibid.*, pp. 163 and 168.
335 Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
336 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 143. For reasons see Raikes, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
337 Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 143. Norton in his *Topics for Indian Statesman* (1858) observed: "....We must also acknowledge with thankfulness the debt we owe to the educated natives" (p. 58). Also see Bruce Tiebant McCully, *English Education and the Origin of Indian Nationalism*, (1940), pp. 226-227.
338 Moghul government.
339 S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 311.
340 Political Proceedings, no. 280, December 30, 1859.
341 In a letter dated April 20, 1859 addressed to Her Majesty the Queen Empress, the Parliament, the Court of Directors, Governor-General etc., Nana Sahib wrote that it was "strange" and "surprising" that they had forgiven people "who truly are mur-

derers," and he, who had "joined the rebels from helplessness," had not been forgiven. Political Proceedings, nos. 63-70, May 27, 1859; no. K. W. 63).

342 Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
343 Anderson and Subedar, *op. cit.*, 114.
344 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
345 See above, sec. V.
346 Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
347 Maj-Gen. Sir Owen Tudor Burne, *Clyde and Strathnairn*, (1891), p. 55*n*.
348 Ball, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 609.
349 Russell, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 224.
350 See footnote 261.
351 Bundle 199, Fo. no. 25 (Persian), August 7, 1857.
352 Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 380.
353 P. E. Roberts, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 388.
354 Ramsay Muir, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
355 Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
356 Muir, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-83.
357 Govt. of India to the Secretary of State for India. Quoted by Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
358 Strachey, *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.
359 *Ibid.*, p. 382.
360 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
361 Quoted by Asoka Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
362 *Ibid.*, pp. 71-73.
363 *loc. cit.*
364 *Ibid.*, p. 74. Gubbins wrote: "The British India Empire was before essentially founded on opinion. It will hereafter have the secure basis of physical power. We relied before upon the support of an army raised from our native subjects. Hereafter we shall trust more to the bayonets of our countrymen" (*op. cit.*, p. 436).
365 Raikes remarked that "a Mohammedan was another word for a rebel" (*op. cit.*, p. 175). Also see Ball, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 79, 92; Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 272; Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt*, p. 8.
366 Sir William Muir, *Indian Mutiny: N. W. P. Intelligence Records*, (1902), vol. I, p. 273.
367 C. F. Andrews, *Maulavi Zakaullah of Delhi*, p. 38.
368 Quoted by Mohammad Nowan, *Muslim India*, (1942), p. 32.
369 Sir W. W. Hunter, *Our Indian Musalmans*, (2nd ed., 1872), p. 170.
370 Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, (8th ed., 1912), p. 313.
371 Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
372 Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
373 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
374 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Muslim Revivalists And The Revolt Of 1857

K. M. ASHRAF

If one reads through the official and British records of 1857 one gathers the vague impression that Muslim revivalist groups and the Wahabis[1] in particular had something to do with it. There are casual references to calls for *Jihad* (holy war) in almost all places, to *Fatwas* of Maulavis in big cities, to the display of the Green Flag in important rebel centres—all of which suggest a certain Muslim revivalist colouring to the events of 1857. It was even put on record at the trial of Bahadur Shah that the rebel leader General Bakht Khan was a Wahabi, and he had appointed a certain Sarfaraz Ali as the leader of the *jihadis* (religious warriors), and that Wahabi contingents joined the Delhi rebels from various places, including one from Tonk.[2]

All this gives, however, no comprehensive or clear picture of their role in or of their contribution to this revolt. In fact, it is never fully appreciated that the revivalist trend was the decisive factor in the political orientation of the Muslims, and the Wahabis were the only people who came not only armed with a consistent anti-British ideology but also with the backing of a network of organised centres spread all over northern India, with contacts in the south and moral influence on the Muslim intelligentsia throughout the country. In a sense the Wahabi outlook on politics and religious life embodied the century-old hostility of the Muslim ruling classes to the growing encroachments of the

British, as also, the urge of the working masses for better and happier conditions of life. It is not, therefore, surprising if the Wahabi leaders of the day displayed both the vigour and tenacity of the working people and the confusions of a decadent ruling class.

In this paper we propose to examine the role of the Wahabis during the Revolt of 1857. But for a proper understanding of the factors which gave its specific form to the Muslim revivalist tradition in India, we shall have to begin somewhat earlier.

I. THE TRADITION

Shah Waliullah

The Ulema (especially those of the Sunnite variety and belonging to the School of Abu Hanifa), were the traditional adjuncts of the Moghul Empire. As a rule they took charge of the educational institutions, supplied cadre for the judiciary and supervised state charities. With the compilation of *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, the great compendium of Shariat Law under Aurangzeb, and its enforcement, the Ulema acquired a fairly decisive voice in state affairs. This became all the more pronounced after his death as the Moghul Empire began to decline soon after and the problem of the rehabilitation of the Timurides became desperately urgent both for the Moghul rulers and for the Ulema who depended on them. It is at this stage that Shah Waliullah (d. 1762) emerged as the most original and constructive thinker of the revivalist school as he had a clear appreciation of political realities. He began by recognising that the concentration of wealth in some families and its maldistribution in general, were evils which inevitably led to degeneration and chaos in society. He, therefore, observed that there was the imperative need for a fair and equitable distribution of national wealth, a corresponding balanced structure of society and guarantee of security and social

freedom to all producers. The denial of these conditions, he maintained, spelt the destruction of civil society.

Shah Waliullah traced the decline of the Moghul Empire to the heavy and unbearable taxes which peasants, artisans and traders, in other words, those engaged in production, had to pay to maintain the ruling class in comfort and luxury. To create a new ideological basis for the reconstruction of the Muslim state, he emphasised the original teachings of the Koran in the light of Muhammad's traditions and also tried to bridge the ever-widening gulf between the doctrines of Khilafat and Imamat (or between the Sunni and the Shia schools of thought) on the one hand, and between the Shariat and Tariqat, or the formalistic-dogmatic and mystic trends, on the other. Shah Waliullah is easily the foremost inspirer of all revivalist schools of 19th century which organised and led a series of anti-British movements.[3]

Sultan Tipu

In the Deccan, the Muslims were faced not with the abstract problem of idealistic radical reconstruction of Muslim society, but with the concrete fact of British aggression. Sultan Tipu, who raised the standard of Islamic revivalism, therefore, instead of looking backwards, lavishly borrowed both from the contemporary revolutionary ideas of the French Revolution of 1789 and from the military science of Napoleon. His "Ahmadi" contingent of Muslim neo-converts was modelled on the most modern European pattern and resembled the Janissaries of the Ottoman Turks rather than the army of the Moghul nobles. To fortify his professions of Islamic revivalism he sometimes referred to the writings of Sayyad Ahmad Sirhindi of Jahangir's time. According to the *Wellesley Papers*, a regular Jacobin club was established in Seringapatam and one night the members, including Tipu, ceremoniously burnt all symbols of royalty and thereafter addressed one another as "citizen." This trend towards egalitarianism is corroborated by the fact that

Tipu issued orders requiring his soldiers to greet one another in the simple Islamic style, the *Salam-o 'Alaikum* being answered by *Wa'-Alaikum-as-Salam*,[4] without the usual elaborate ceremonial of the feudal courts. Within his own territory Tipu undertook to provide means of livelihood for all Muslims; and those of them who wanted to engage in trade or take to husbandry were provided by the State with the necessary funds and land, according to the needs of the individual.[5]

Tipu had singled out the British as the main enemy of the Muslims. He appealed to all Moghul rulers, including the Moghul Emperor, Shah Alam, to join him in the new anti-British crusade.[6] As Shah Alam, being merely a pensioner of the Scindhia, did not join in the venture, Tipu ordered his own name to be inserted in the Friday sermon thereby superseding that of the Moghul Emperor.[7] As a sovereign ruler of Islam and the upholder of revivalism Tipu not only preached *Jihad* against the British within his dominions and in the neighbouring State of Hyderabad, but also sent his emissaries to far-off Bengal and Kathiawar.[8] It is symptomatic of the new spirit of revived Islam that Tipu chose to fight and die, sword in hand, when Seringapatam was occupied by the British in 1799.

The spirit of anti-British resistance which he had aroused was very much in evidence soon after in the Vellore Mutiny of 1806, which in the words of General Briggs was "the first effort made by the discontented Mohammadans to affect the destruction of our power in the South." The General further noted that the Mohammedan soldiers of his own regiment, then stationed in Hyderabad, were "deeply implicated in hostile intrigues" and that many of his British officers slept "with loaded pistols under their pillows."[9] This was, in fact, a dress rehearsal for 1857 and Lord Bentinck, the then governor of Madras, noted that the Indian infantry and cavalry "had been" ingeniously worked up into a question of religion "and the malcontents were planning to re-establish a Muslim government under one of the sons of

Sultan Tipu."[10] To prevent "a great explosion" as the conspiracy had reached the most remote parts of the army, he called for extreme vigilance.[11]

Under these conditions it was only natural if in 1857 the Muslims of Seringapatam regularly prayed for the success of the Delhi rebels at the tomb of Tipu,[12] and Bahadur Shah, the titular head of the Delhi rebel government, in turn, remembered with shame and humiliation that the anti-British crusade of Sultan Tipu had not been supported by the Indian soldiery.[13]

Faraizi Revivalists of Bengal

The Faraizis of Bengal represent a radical agrarian trend in the development of the Muslim revivalist movement. They followed in the wake of the Permanent Settlement (1793), and the British economic policy which had overthrown the old Muslim landlords and ruined the handicrafts of Bengal, reducing the population of Dacca from 150,000 to 20,000. The Faraizis openly preached the expropriation of landlords without compensation.[14] Shariatullah of Faridpur, who founded the Faraizi movement in 1804, thus began by uniting the peasantry against the exactions of the new zamindars in the name of resuscitated faith. "There was also a general feeling at that time that the real object of the Faraizis was the expulsion of the alien rulers and the restoration of Mohammedan power." This significant observation was later made by Dampier, the Superintendent of Police to the government of Bengal,[15] and was, in any case, confirmed by the open anti-British activities of Dudu Miyan, the son and successor of Shariatullah.

Dudu Miyan followed the military campaign of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi against the Sikhs in 1831 (to be discussed later) by his own independent, though unsuccessful action, against the soldiers of the East India Company in Baraset He went further than his father in openly advocating that "No man has a right to levy taxes on God's earth." He also established village courts under pious elders and "anyone daring to take cases to British courts was dealt with by social

penalties."[16] The Faraizis were thus "Red Republicans" in politics and "broke into the houses of Hindu and Muslim landholders with perfect impartiality." Dampier had further noted that the gathering of 80,000 Faraizis, which asserted complete equality, was drawn from the "lower classes."[17] Dudu Miyan thus inevitably came into conflict with the Hindu and Muslim landed aristocracy and the British planters in the districts of the 24 Parganas, Nadia, and Faridpur. He even organised the peasant riots in 1838, 1841, 1844 and 1846. In 1857, when the news of the Delhi uprising arrived, he was arrested and taken into custody.[18]

The Wahabi Call for Jihad

With the entry of Lord Lake into Delhi in 1803 began a new chapter in the history of the Ulema, who were now called upon to define the legal position of Muslims vis-a-vis the British rulers in the light of Koranic doctrines and the injunctions of the Shariat This was by no means a simple task since the Shariat had nowhere provided for the concept of Muslims as a conquered people. Luckily for them, the mantle of Shah Waliullah had fallen on the worthy and fearless Shah Abdul Aziz, who unhesitatingly declared that the whole land from "this city (i.e., Delhi) to Calcutta" had passed into the possession of the "Nasranis" (the British), who now held sovereign and paramount power, and that the so-called Muslim rulers of Hyderabad, Lucknow and Rampur existed only on their sufference.[19] In other words, India, according to Shah Abdul Aziz, had technically ceased to be "land of Islam" (*Dar-ul-Islam*) and was henceforth to be considered an "enemy territory" (*Dar-ul-Harb*).

This created an entirely new and grave situation, for in case of India being declared a *Dar-ul-Harb*, it was incumbent on the Muslims either to wage a *Jihad* against the British or migrate to some free Muslim country. There was no other choice. If, for some unavoidable reason, they were to live under the British rule, they were to make all possible efforts to overthrow it. There could be no amity or friend-

ship with the British usurpers. It was in fact absolutely forbidden (*haram*).

The next task was to choose the leader (Imam) who would conduct the holy war and to pledge one's fealty and service (*b'eat*) to him.[20]

In due course Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi (1786-1831) was selected as the Imam and the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir-al-Muslimin*), with Muhammad Ismail (*d.* 1831) of Waliullah's family, as his lieutenant and chief organiser of military campaigns. The latter fanatically held that those who refused to accept the Imamate (in this case of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi), or backed out after accepting it, were to be treated as traitors to Islam and were subject to the same penalties as any other infidel.[21] It is also significant that these Wahabis (who later formed a government under Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi based professedly on Koranic principles) considered all time honoured illegal cesses and impositions on petty traders, ryots and artisans as opposed to the letter and spirit of Islam. They openly censured the local officials, including the Kazis and Kotwals for their extortionate demands. Mohammad Ismail's ingenuity discovered the basis for these radical reforms in *Fatwa* issued during the rule of Timur himself, the great ancestor of the Moghul emperors.[22] The Wahabis similarly taught the people to take the law into their own hands and to defy the government "if obedience to its laws amounted to a breach of God's commandments."[23] Their followers went about openly preaching that all acts of an oppressor and a tyrant were to be resisted.[24]

Curiously enough the concept of Imam, as evolved by the leading Wahabi thinkers, was defined in the spirit of absolutism and their *Amir* (leader) was modelled on the military despots who had sat on the throne of Delhi. Any popular or democratic pattern of government appeared to be completely alien to them. In their terminology the Imam was a "Son of the Prophet" and his functionaries were his "dutiful servants and devoted slaves." If any of the Imam's

followers considered himself equal to him in status, he was accused of "disloyalty to salt" (*namak harami*) and such lapse on his part naturally incurred "royal displeasure."[25] Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi himself used to address Muhammad Ishaq, the son of Shah Abdul Aziz, as "His Exalted Highness" (*Sahibzada' wala tabar*). This partly explains why the Wahabis ended up by restoring the old and decadent feudal order and by entrusting to the feudal chiefs even the sacred cause of Islamic revival for which so many of them had laid down their lives.

For our immediate purpose, however, it is well to remember that the Wahabis of India aroused the masses of Muslims to free themselves both from the political tyranny of the British and the Muslim oppressors, as well as from the economic exploitation of Indian vested interests. They helped to eliminate somewhat class distinctions within Muslim society and inspired the intelligentsia to unite with the discontented mass of common people for the cause of regeneration. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of these Wahabi leaders, the movement of religious revivalism created a broad basis of unity against the British among the various sections of Muslim society—the expropriated aristocrat, the ruined handicraftsman, the frustrated Ulema and the discontented soldier—as also among Muslims and Hindus. In the words of Dr. Hunter, their system was "essentially adapted to the hopes and fears of a restless populace."[26]

To appreciate fully the magnetism and appeal of the Wahabi demand for *Jihad*, let us study the reactions of two notable aristocrats, Momin Khan (1800-51), a leading Urdu and Persian poet, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1820-98), the famous social reformer and Wahabi who later tried to repudiate what he had preached up to 1846.[27]

Momin Khan composed a *masnawi*,[28] both in Persian and in Urdu, to glorify the *Jihad* of "the Amir of Islamic armies and the virtuous Imam" (i.e., Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi) against the Sikhs, and, incidentally, to "refresh his own faith." He was no friend of the Christian invaders

either and his activities involved him in serious trouble with the British authorities of Delhi.[29] His devotion to the Imam and to the cause of the Wahabis in general, remained unshaken to the end of his life.[30] He concluded his Urdu *masnawi* with a prayer, asking God for his martyrdom in the company of the "warriors of Islam."

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan while speaking of eminent personalities of Delhi in his book, not only includes some of the Wahabi leaders, but also extols the Wahabite call to *Jihad* in exaggerated terms of religious piety. To him Shah Abdul Aziz is "the foremost among the Ulema" and their undisputed leader and teacher; Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi is not only blessed with "the honour of martyrdom in the company of believers of pure faith" but had previous intimation of the event from God through divine inspiration (*kashf*). It is, therefore, natural if millions of Muslims feel convinced of the great virtue of holy war, look upon the sacrifice of their life and property in "the way of God" as a religious blessing (*sa'adat*) and follow the "royal road" of *Jihad* shown to them by Mohammad Ismail and Abdul Hai.[31]

Fifteen years after the death of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi and Mohammad Ismail (when the Wahabi volunteers were trekking to the far-off colony of Sittana beyond the North West Frontier Province to fight the British) Sir Syed still persisted in his admiration for this "obedience to the precepts of Muhammad" and considered *Jihad* an "act of extreme religious piety, the spiritual benefits (*sawab*) of which accrue to the sacred soul of Muhammad Ismail, the martyr who led it."[32] When, late in his life, Sir Syed passed over to the camp of the British, he prompted Chiragh Ali to explain away the Koranic doctrines relating to *Jihad* as designed only for defensive purposes and, in any case, without a mandatory character.[33]

The spark of *Jihad* which gave faith and courage even to Sir Syed before 1846 became a glowing flame by the time of the 1857 revolt and there are instances on record when men of academic taste gave up their life-long occupa-

tion of teaching and joined the "warriors" in fighting the British.[34]

Wahabis in Action before 1857.

It is outside the scope of the present essay to discuss either the lives or the military exploits of the early Wahabi leaders. Those interested in such details may read the story in Hunter's book. What interests us in the context of 1857 is their plan of organisation together with their technique of conspiratorial work, which survived their military collapse in 1831.

As early as 1820 Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi, the Imam, appointed his trusted agents in all important towns of north India who were put under the regional *khalifas,* nominated by the central leadership. Patna, for instance, as the regional centre for Bengal, was put in charge of Muhammad Husain.[35]

It is interesting to note that no sooner was *Jihad* declared against the Sikh government on December 21, 1826, than these agencies started to enlist recruits—for Mujahid camp on the frontier. Similarly, when a regular Wahabi government was established, first at Peshawar and then at Sittana and financial assistance was demanded, this network of Wahabi organisations immediately began to collect the *zakat*, or religious tithes, for its suport. Since the work was secretive and dangerous, the *khalifas,* or regional organisers were required to make periodic reports in person at the headquarters in Sittana. In due course the Wahabis established a regular secretariat, a finance department and other paraphernalia of government under an Imam-king, who functioned until long afterwards in full vigour. But the activities of the Wahabi centres in north India were assuming slowly a pronounced anti British character and aroused the suspicion of the British authorities.

The Wahabis, it should be remembered, were sometimes obliged to send recruits and funds over distances of up to 2,000 miles which led to the establishment of a chain of

khanquahs (hospices) under trusted and experienced agents all along the route from Bengal to Sittana. To conceal their real vocation these agents engaged in various kinds of trade and professions. For instance, suppose a recruit set out from Bengal, say, for the Wahabi camp on the frontier, he was received on his way at the end of each stage of his journey by the head of the Wahabi hospice, and thus passed from stage to stage until he arrived at his destination. A code language was similarly developed to help the trans-mission of large sums of money and of arms and ammunition.

In fact, the three striking features of this conspiratorial technique, as revealed in the course of the Wahabi trials after 1857, were the resourcefulness and sagacity of their agents; the secrecy with which complicated operations were conducted; the absolute fidelity which the members of the organisation displayed towards each other; and their resolve to persevere till death in the service of the cause which they believed to be God's own.[36]

When in 1820 Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi went to Calcutta in pursuance of his professed object of fighting the Sikhs (on account of the alleged suppression of Islam in Ranjit Singh's domains) the British were almost anxious to en-courage and support him. But sometime later when the Wahabis of the frontier enlisted the support of the Swat ruler (whose Anglophobia was well known) and began to engage in anti-British wars, the British had to revise their attitude and policy. This became all the more urgent when they discovered that the Wahabi volunteers were fighting on the side of their enemies during the Afghan War, and Mubariz-ud Dowlah, a brother of the Nizam, claiming to be a deputy of the late Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi and the *Rais-al Muslimin* (ruler of Muslims) was establishing con-tacts all over the country with the aim of overthrowing both the British and their henchman, the Nizam.[37]

In 1851 the British learnt to their dismay that the Wahabis were plotting in the Punjab to overthrow them

and were in correspondence "with our troops" for that purpose. Between 1850 and 1857 the Wahabis continued to instigate the frontier tribes against the British, which led to no less than 16 British expeditions, involving 33,000 regular troops. In 1857 the Wahabi centre on the frontier coordinated its plans with those of the rebels in Delhi and Lucknow, and tried to organise an anti-British rising on a countrywide scale. In this connection, the ruler of Swat, the Akhund, contacted the Indian army units on the frontier and in the Punjab[38] and the situation became so menacing that General Sir Sidney Cotton had to proceed to the frontier with 5,000 men. By 1863, when measures were taken for the final destruction of the Wahabi centre at Sittana on the frontier, the British had undertaken 20 military expeditions, aggregating 60,000 regular troops besides irregulars and police auxiliaries.[39]

II. THE ROLE OF WAHABIS IN 1857

Organisation and Programme

Some Indian scholars hold that the revolt of 1857 was no more than an uncoordinated and spontaneous outburst of a section of the discontented soldiery and should not be treated in any sense as a war of independence or a national uprising. This view of 1857 is not supported by some of the best informed British observers who carefully investigated the problem on the spot. For instance, Alexander Duff, whose series of letters on "the Indian Rebellion" was published immediately after the revolt, "could not but regard and pronounce the mutiny and rebellion as the result of political conspiracy."[40] He considered it "not a mere military revolt, but a rebellion, a revolution," "a rebellion on the part of vast multitudes beyond the Sepoy army, against British supremacy and sovereignty."[41] Similarly Malleson, whose exhaustive account of 1857 is well enough known and who renewed his enquiries later when Indians could communicate with him freely, was convinced that "extraneous

causes were at work to promote an ill-feeling, a hatred not personal but national."[42]

If one notes the sequence of events ever since the days of Sultan Tipu, who tried to mobilize the whole of India in his anti-British crusade, and the Mutiny of Vellore (in 1806), when India witnessed a miniature 1857, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that during the intervening half century Indians as a whole were consciously preparing for a countrywide movement of resistance against the British rulers. The only notable exceptions were the class of new landholders and the Anglicized intelligentsia of the Presidency towns who owed their newly acquired wealth and social position to the British and somehow felt that their fortunes were linked up with them.[43]

Thanks to this long preparation, the freedom fighters of India had, by 1857, acquired a certain grasp of the national and international situation and a solid base in the Indian army. For instance, towards the end of the 18th century both Tipu, the Sultan of Mysore, and Vazir Ali, the Nawab of Oudh, had tried to enlist the support of anti-British forces at home and abroad, and such diplomatic moves were very much in evidence in 1857.

Besides, ever since the rising of Indian soldiers in Vellore (1806), unofficial political committees of soldiers were a regular feature of army life. In the forties these committees, especially in the Punjab and the Frontier Provinces formed contacts with the Wahabi leaders, who had already developed their technique of conspiratorial work through a chain of hospices and secret agents. Out of such traditions and contacts emerged eventually both the elected committees of soldiers which virtually took over the government in Delhi and Lucknow in 1857, and the trained military personnel, who displayed amazing resourcefulness and courage in fighting the British army.

It is equally important to note that by 1857 the leaders of the anti-British movements had begun to talk in terms

of a popular programme. That the old machinery of the feudal state needed overhauling was taken for granted, at least among the Wahabi leaders, ever since the days of Shah Waliullah Sultan Tipu had, in fact, improved on this when his government took over the responsibility of providing for unemployment. The most difficult was the problem of poor and landless peasants and the Faraizis of Bengal had already included the abolition, even the expropriation of the landlords in their programme. Thus Bakht Khan was only putting into practice a traditional demand of the anti-British movement when he abolished the salt and sugar taxes and penalised hoarding in Delhi. Similar measures were taken by Maulavi Ahmadullah and the soldiers' committee in Lucknow. It is interesting to note that on one occasion the rebel government of Delhi offered five *bighas* of rent-free land in perpetuity to the family of every soldier who gave his life fighting against the British.[44] Some scholars, in fact, hold that the popular upsurge both in Delhi and Oudh in 1857, soon assumed the character of a regular peasant war in the countryside which so scared the vested interests in the Provincial government of the "mutineers" that they "committed suicide as a free people" and passed over to the camp of the enemy.[45]

This is not to deny that the patriots sometimes exhibited rank opportunism in exploiting the religious prejudices of the masses and denounced some of the beneficent reforms of the British administrators, for instance the abolition of *Sati*, the encouragement of widow remarriage, and to some extent the modification of caste.[46] Since the Hindu and Muslim masses were united, the rebel government at Delhi banned the slaughter of cows as a gesture of good will to the Hindus; while the Hindu rebel leaders (for instance Nana Sahib) returned the compliment by maintaining all the state symbols of the Moghul government—for instance, the use of the lunar calendar, the inscription of "Bismillah" in official communications and reports and even the observance of Friday as a public holiday.

Bahadur Shah: A Symbol of National Unity

The popular leaders of the revolt of 1857 similarly realised that in Bahadur Shah, the nominal King of Delhi who was just then facing the prospect of complete effacement at the hands of the British,[47] they had a priceless symbol of national unity behind whom the various classes and communities of India could unite.[48] They agreed not only to put him at the head of the central government with Delhi as the capital, but also to observe the traditional formalities of the highly centralised Moghul administration.[49]

Such a prospect was particularly pleasing to the soul of the Muslim revivalists who had always dreamt of a strong and unified state and would have rejoiced to see a descendant of the great Amir Timur playing the role of an Imam-King. It may be said to the credit of Bahadur Shah that he did come up to the expectations. To the Muslim revivalist he was a Ghazi, to the Iranian or the Shiaites of Lucknow an Imamate, to the mystic a Murshid and Pir who had his disciples (*chelas*) after the Hindu fashion. The intelligentsia universally admired him for his genuine love of poetry and literature. Besides, in the event of the restoration of his regal authority he held out the prospect of considerable concessions to win the support of all classes of people. To the ruling Hindu chiefs he offered the right to adoption,[50] to the old landholding classes, the annulment of the Permanent Settlement together with very substantial reduction of rent; to the Indian tradesmen, the abolition of all British monopolies and the burdensome taxes, coupled with government subsidies and facilities for the transportation of their goods. To the government employees was offered substantial increase of pay —a minimum of from two to three hundred rupees to higher officials—and double the pay to the soldier. Even the artisans were promised security of employment which would "no doubt ensure their prosperity." The saintly monarch,

of course remembered the pundits, faqirs and other holy men, who were to receive big endowments of rent-free lands from him in the grand manner of an Akbar or Alamgir.[51] In fairness to the short-lived regime of the patriots under Bahadur Shah, it should be admitted that the functionaries of the new administration in Delhi, Lucknow, Bareilly and in several other places, discharged their duties with remarkable efficiency, discipline and conscientiousness and upheld the honour of the provisional government even after its overthrow at the hands of the enemy.[52]

III. LEADERSHIP OF 1857 AND THE WAHABIS

There have been vague speculations as to who were the leaders behind the great national movement of 1857 and some people naturally imagine that the uprising was probably planned by Bahadur Shah and Wajid Ali Shah, as representatives of the two distinguished royal families of northern India. It is even suggested that they *jointly* incited the Hindustani army and planned a general massacre of Europeans, to be followed by an attack of the other Indian ruling chiefs on the British army.[53] There is, however, very little evidence to support this contention. On the contrary, from materials available, it appears that Wajid Ali Shah or Bahadur Shah for that matter, played a very minor role even when they had a say in the affairs of the provisional government. From the letters discovered at the house of one Pir Ali in 1857 at Patna, one gathers that besides the Wahabis, two other groups were operating professedly on behalf of the rulers of Delhi and Lucknow respectively. But the evidence is by no means conclusive to prove that they were authorised by these dignitaries.[54] Among the members of the royal family of Delhi who can claim to have actively participated in and led the resistance movement, Prince Firoz Shah,[55] a grandson of the Moghul emperor Farrukh Siyar, depended for support on the Wahabi Pathan contingent of soldiers who had joined him after being discharged from the service of the Mahratta

princes. In the case of the Begum of Oudh, the guiding spirit was, of course, the famous "Maulavi of Fyzabad," who, from all accounts can legitimately claim to be "the brain and the hand of the conspiracy."[56] It can be asserted with confidence that while Ahmadullah was not strictly a Wahabi, in other words, belonging to the Sect of Ahl-i-Hadis or a traditionalist, he was certainly a revivalist like his Deccanese countryman, Sultan Tipu, and worked for the same ideals of political regeneration. In any case, he was working in closest cooperation with the group of Wahabis and the followers of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi.[57]

The dominating figure of the revolt and the leader of the central government at Delhi, however, is Bakht Khan, the Rohilla warrior from Sultanpur (Oudh). Bakht Khan possessed a rich experience of military training under the British and assumed the title of "Lord Commander" when he superceded the decadent prince, Mirza Moghul, in the command of the patriotic forces in Delhi.[58] Bakht Khan was, from all accounts, a confirmed and fanatical Wahabi who arrived in Delhi with a band of Wahabi organisers and appointed his spiritual guide, Maulavi Sarfaraz Ali[59] as the "Imam" of the contingent of "religious warriors" (*Mujahids*) numbering several thousands.[60]

It is thanks to these Wahabi activists that the morale of the army was kept up to the last moment in spite of serious initial mistakes of strategy and the political backwardness of the royal family.[61] The Wahabi volunteers not only carried on the fight in difficult situations but occasionally snatched the initiative from the enemy even when patriotic resistance had broken down.[62] Some idea of the spirit of Wahabis may be gathered from the fact that every soldier in the camp of Bakht Khan had taken a pledge to fight the British to the last. When Delhi fell, Bakht Khan first tried to persuade Bahadur Shah to accompany him and lend his support in building a second front on a better strategic site and when the king refused, he joined forces with Ahmadullah in the provisional government at

Mohammadi and became the commander-in-chief and defence minister with Sarfaraz Ali as the "Chief Qazi" and Nana Sahib as diwan or prime minister. Finally when they had to give up Mohammadi, the last stronghold of the patriots, in face of the British attack and Ahmadullah was treacherously killed, Bakht Khan crossed over into Nepal with Nana Sahib and others.

The administration of Delhi under Bakht Khan and the Wahabis is well worth a study for its democratic policies. We have already noted that Bakht Khan abolished duty on such articles of common consumption as salt and sugar, penalised hoarding and offered five *bighas* of rent-free land in perpetuity to the families of those soldiers who happened to die in the fight against the British. We have also mentioned the pledge of the patriotic army to fight to the last and their amazing morale even when the enemy had surrounded them on all sides.

The administration under Bakht Khan was based on the support of the common people, on the alliance of the soldiery (who were mainly outsiders) and the artisans and the workers from within the city.[63] Bakht Khan was himself an embodiment of the spirit of the revivalist movement Simple in habits, he lived and moved about like a common soldier who could not be recognised on his first entry in Delhi and was ridiculed both for his uncouth appearance and for his unsophisticated, even boorish manners. But he fought the British and out-generalled them for weeks together. He made sincere though unsuccessful attempts to see that the civilian population of Delhi was not inconvenienced because of the army, and strict discipline was observed under all circumstances. No wonder if the whole of the degenerate crowd of princely commanders, and aristocrats who formed the advisory council of Bahadur Shah during the first few weeks of the provisional government, just faded away after the arrival of Bakht Khan and the formation of the soldier's committee with its democratic constitution and attempt at observance of rules.

IV. WAHABIS OUTSIDE DELHI

We have already noted that long before the outbreak of 1857, the leaders of the Wahabi movement had built up a network of their organisation in all important centres in North India, with regional *khalifas* and trusted local agents. After the death of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi in 1832 they also established contacts with Muslim centres of the Deccan like Hyderabad and Mysore and with some of the States of Central India and Rajputana, for instance, Bhopal, Tonk, Jaipur, etc. Their influence in cantonments and in soldiers' committees of the Hindustani army was already noticeable in 1840. In a word, one might say that by 1857 the Wahabis had developed a countrywide political organisation and in the region of the Doab in particular, say from Delhi to Allahabad, every town of note had its organised and functioning group of Wahabis and other Muslim revivalists, all united in their intense hatred of the British and anxious to participate in a general uprising. This provided, in fact, the political and organisational base which helped Bakht Khan and other Wahabi leaders to capture the provisional government of Delhi.

The year 1857 opened with the distribution of *chappatis* all over the countryside, accompanied by inspired rumours of the impending overthrow of British rule and some sort of consultations among the soldiers' committees.[64] This was soon followed by the "cartridge incident" in Barrackpur and thereafter any one could see that some kind of general uprising was going to break out. In fact, tentative dates for such an uprising were announced to the people all over North India through popular whispering campaigns. Meanwhile, on the higher plane, leaders like Ahmadullah, who was in touch with various groups of Muslims and Nana Sahib, who represented the views of the Hindu aristocracy, contacted one another and mutually agreed on some plan of action which was popularised among the lower ranks by all kinds of local people—the Ulema, the tradesmen, the old

landlords, even common sadhus and itinerant faqirs. In any case, the Hindustani soldiers of Meerut and the gate-keepers of Delhi city both knew the tasks that were allotted to them for the 10th of May, 1857.[45]

Once the signal was given by the entry of Meerut Sowars and the proclamation of the provisional government in Delhi under Bahadur Shah, the network of Wahabi organisations immediately came into action all over northern India, particularly in predominantly Muslim areas. True to the convention, members of every revivalist group first chose their leader (*Amir*) for the holy war (*Jihad*) and bound themselves to him by an oath of fidelity (*b'eat*). Then unfurling the green flag of Islam, they took out a procession, calling for the enlistment of volunteers (*Mujahids*) and popularising the *Fatwa* relating to *Jihad*. Meanwhile, the armoury was raided, the treasury was looted, and the prison gates were thrown open. In some cases, the revenue records were burnt, and the *Sahukars* were forced to write off debts.

This was followed by some sort of armed attack on the British barracks or on the local English officials, as the case may be, and the central government at Delhi was asked either to nominate one of their men as administrator for the area, failing which they delegated such powers to one of their own nominees, invariably to the leader of the local group. In any case, in the new administrative set-up of the area, the common people had a very big voice and if there was a regular unit of the army in the locality, the elected committee of the soldiers took charge of the affairs.

Let us illustrate these developments with examples from some of the cities and towns of India.

Lucknow: No sooner the news of the revolt spread in the city on 30 May, the Wahabis of Lucknow unfurled the green flag and paraded the streets, followed by a crowd of about 1,500 people. They asked the people to enlist as volunteers in the cause of the *Jihad* against the British. In due course, they released the famous Maulavi Ahmadullah who was waiting to be hanged and asked him to assume the

leadership of the resistance movement. In fact, the revivalist sentiment was so strong, that the army commander of the provisional government himself adopted the green flag as his official banner and, to add to its sanctity, tied a copy of the Koran over it. In due course, flags of other denominations also appeared and every group tried to hoist its flag as high as possible.[66]

Patna: In Patna, before the Wahabi leaders of Sadiqpur could take any steps, they were put under arrest by the British commissioner. A local bookseller, however, who had very close association with the Wahabi centre, took over the leadership of the resistance movement and organised an armed detachment of volunteers. Their action resulted in the death of an Englishman and was of such magnitude that Sikh troops had to be called to suppress them.[67]

Agra: The people of Agra immediately raised a force of *Mujahids* under the leadership of Dr. Wazir Khan, the noted Wahabi scholar and surgeon, and besieged the British garrison in the Fort. Dr. Wazir Khan, however, was too important a person to be left out of account. He had to join the central leadership of the Wahabis and followed Bakht Khan and Sarfaraz Ali first to Delhi and then to Lucknow and Mohammadi.[68] The Wahabis then merged with the local resistance movement as a whole.

Hyderabad: Hyderabad, as we know, was a strong centre of the Wahabis ever since the days of Mubariz-ud Dowlah and the revivalist sentiments were particularly strong among the Muslim soldiery. During the 1857 movement two well-known Wahabi leaders, Turrabaz Khan and Maulavi Allauddin organised an attack of the soldiery against the British Residency, in spite of the efforts of the Nizam to dissuade Muslims from joining the movement. Eventually the attack failed and the Wahabi leaders were arrested. Turrabaz Khan was later shot and Maulavi Allauddin was deported to the Andamans.[69]

Allahabad: In Allahabad, as soon as the news of the

revolt reached, the Hindustani soldiers in the Fort killed the British officers and took charge of the ammunition and of military stores. Meanwhile, Liaqat Ali, the famous Wahabi leader, who lived originally in Chail but had then settled in Allahabad city, unfurled the green flag in the name of Bahadur Shah and, accompanied by Ram Chandra, another leader of patriotic forces, established the headquarters of the Allahabad government in Khusraw Bagh.

Liaqat Ali was either authorised by the central government at Delhi or invested by the local rebels with necessary powers; in any case, he functioned as the governor of Allahabad on behalf of the king of Delhi until the British troops dislodged him after the initial victory of the patriotc forces. Liaqat Ali then joined Ahmadullah in Lucknow and took part in the resistance movement until he was arrested on the border of Nepal. We have already referred to his trial and deportation in 1872.

Similar actions on a smaller scale were reported from Aligarh, Shajahanpur, Hissan, Bareilly and from several other places, not excluding the cantonment area in the Punjab and the Frontier. We shall conclude these illustrations with a passing reference to the founder of the Deoband seminary (situated in Sahranpur district of Uttar Pradesh).

Shamli: In Shamli, near Meerut, the local unit of the revivalist Muslims chose their Imam-commander and a Kazi to form the nucleus of the rebel government, and immediately organised their armed volunteers to attack the local unit of the British artillery.[70] But since the resistance movement collapsed soon afterwards and the provisional government of Delhi fell, the leaders of the Shamli rising migrated to Arabia. However, Muhammad Qasim, one of the participants in the Shamli engagement who founded the Deoband *Dar-ul-ulum* or religious seminary and in that connection laid down the fundamental rules of the institution, forbade his followers to accept any government aid and banned the teaching of English.[71]

V. AFTER THE REVOLT

After the failure of the 1857 revolt the entire Muslim population in several places was massacred and the Wahabi leaders were hunted out throughout Northern India for summary execution. Hundreds of them, including several distinguished Ulema, were blown by the cannon, while others were deported to the penal settlement of the Andamans. In fact, among the first batch of prisoners to arrive in the Andamans were such well known Wahabi leaders of the revolt as Mufti Mazhar Karim of Delhi and Munshi Inayat Ahmad of Lucknow, followed by the victims of the Ambala (1865) and Patna (1869) Wahabi trials. It is a remarkable testimony to the undying vigour and tenacity of these Wahabi leaders that the irrepressible Maulana Ahmadullah of Patna who was deported there, organised the assassination of Lord Mayo, the viceroy of India, on his official visit to the Settlement in 1872. Meanwhile, the Wahabi centre at Sittana, continued to function—"the centre towards which the hopes alike of our disloyal subjects and our enemies beyond the frontier turn" (Hunter).

It is interesting to note that in 1888 when Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded his Patriotic Association to wean the Muslims away from the Indian National Congress, the Wahabis of Ludhiana (in the Punjab) published a book of *Fatwas* in support of the Congress entitled *Nasrat-al Abrar*, comprising over one hundred *Fatwas*, including two from the leaders of Deoband.[72] Similarly, when World War I broke out, the Wahabi centre on the Frontier took a leading part in the establishment of the first "Indian independent government" at Kabul. The end of the war saw the Wahabis participating in and leading the great movement of non-cooperation, initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. A Wahabi nucleus still exists on the Frontier though it is now devoid of any political significance.[73]

One could easily point to Fazle Haq Khayrabadi as the symbol of the Muslim spirit of 1857. Although technically

not a Wahabi himself and even hostile to their creed and religious practices, he consistently supported their anti-British actions. In his *Risala-i Ghadariyya*,[74] written in elegant Arabic during his imprisonment in the Andamans, he characterised his anti-British stand as the only true path a Muslim could follow, irrespective of the fact whether he was a Wahabi or not.[75] This helped the Wahabis in assuming the unchallenged leadership of the Muslims as a whole in the events of 1857 and it is no wonder if the British authorities considered them "a persistently belligerent class" and "a source of permanent danger to the Empire."[76]

NOTES

[1] The term "Wahabi" is certainly inaccurate inasmuch as the political objectives of the so-called Indian Wahabis and their social outlook in general, were derived, not from the doctrines of Abdul Wahab of Nejd (*d.* 1787), but from the earlier teachings of Shah Waliullah of Delhi (*d.* 1762). Some Muslim revivalists like Ubaidullah Sindhi (1861-1948), Ghulam Sarwar and Ajmal Khan have therefore chosen to style themselves "Waliullahis" or followers of Shah Waliullah. I have, however, retained the term because of its popular and historical associations.

[2] *Trial of the Ex-King of Delhi.*

[3] For a brief review of Shah Waliullah's teachings, see *History of Philosophy — Eastern and Western*, vol. I, article on Waliullah. For a detailed study of his theories and philosophical exposition of Islam, see his *Hujjat-allah-al Baligha*, (Arabic text, Cairo edition).

[4] Mahmud, *Sahifa-i-Tipu Sultan*, vol. II., p. 244.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-52.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 238

[7] In his letter of 2 August 1786 to Shah Alam, he calls himself *Khadim-i-Din-i Muhammadi* (Servant of the Faith of Muhammad), (*Ibid.*, vol. II., p. 8)

[8] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 381.

[9] Evans Bell, *Memoir of General Briggs*, p. 24.

[10] John Bradshaw, *Sir Thomas Munro*, pp. 135-36.

[11] *loc. cit.*

[12] Mahmud, *op. cit.*, vol. I., p. 29

[13] The relevant verse runs as follows: *Itabar-i-Sabr-O-taqat Khak men rakkhun Zafar—Fauj-i Hindustan ne kab sath Tipu ka diya*

(Trust and patience be damned, oh Zafar, when did the soldiery of India support Tipu). Quoted by Amir Ahmad Alavi, *Bahadur Shah Zafar*, p. 182

[14] They taught: "Land belongs to God and its yield to those who plough the land." Quoted by Ashraf, *Notes on the Muslim Question*, (MS.), p. 12.

[15] Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances in India*, p. 113n

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[17] Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, pp. 101-02.

[18] Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 113

[19] Abdul Aziz, *Fatwa-i-Azizi*, vol. I., pp. 16, 17

[20] "Once the Imam is chosen by the consensus of responsible Muslims. . . It is not permissable to delay the pledge of fealty to him" (*Ibid.*, vol. II., p. 77).

[21] Mirza Hairat, *Hayat-i-Tayyaba*, p. 278.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 283. The word used for "illegal impositions" is "*Mal-hai-Na-haq.*"

[23] The doctrine is laid down in the form of a *hadis*: *See* Muhammad Ismail, *Mansab-i-Imamat.*

[24] In this context, see verses quoted from *Hariq al Ashrar* in Muhammad Ismail, *Taqwiyat-al-Islam*

[25] Mohammad Ismail, *op. cit.*

[26] Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

[27] Sir Syed's comments on the Wahabi leaders reproduced here were first published in 1846 in his *Asar-as-Sanadid* (chap IV) but were deleted from subsequent editions of the book. This chapter has now been republished (in Urdu) under the title *Tazkira-i-Ahl-i Dehli* by Anjaman-i Taraqqi Urdu of Pakistan

[28] Momin Khan; *Kulliyat.*

[29] He refers to it in a verse. *Vide* Momin Khan. *Persian Diwan* (MS.).

[30] Momin Khan, *op. cit.*

[31] Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *op. cit*

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[33] Chiragh Ali held that the *Jihad*, far from being a *Farz-i-Ain* (Absolute and mandatory duty) was *Farz-i-kifayat* that is, of a permissive and symbolic character. *Vide* p 137 of his book *Tahqiq-al- Jihad.*

[34] Take for instance, the Pathan tutor in the service of a Delhi nobleman who joined the rebels "in search of martyrdom" *Vide* Agha Mirza Beg, *Karnama-i-Sarwari*, p. 7.

[35] Hunter, op. *cit.*, p. 5.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 84 90 for details.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14. In 1838 Wilayat Ali and Maulavi Salim, two important Wahabi leaders had gone to the Deccan and established a strong secret organisation under Mubariz-ud Dowlah which was discovered by the British Resident only in 1839 Mubariz-ud Dowlah was eventually imprisoned in Golconda Fort and died there in 1851 (*Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad* vol. I, pp. 126-33).

[38] Ashraf, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[39] Hunter, *op. cit.*, for details.

[40] Duff, *The Indian Rebellion*, p. 195.

[41] Quoted by Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, pp. 282-283.

[42] Malleson, *The Indian Mutiny of* 1857, Preface, p. viii.

[43] Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 181, gives an estimate of the various classes of Indians who stood by the British in 1857.

[44] Zakaullah, *Tarikh-i Uruj*, etc.

[45] *India To-day*, Feb.-March 1952, p. 55.

[46] Kaye, *Mutiny Papers Misc.*, 727.

[47] The British authorities had already informed Bahadur Shah that he was to vacate the Red Fort along with other members of the royal family and was not to nominate anyone as his successor. In other words, the very name of the Timurides was going to be effaced from the memory of the people. Bahadur Shah refers to this prospect of extinction of the Moghul rule in a pathetic verse saying that "the business of (formally) administering the State was confined to him alone. After him, there was to be neither a successor nor the name of the (Moghul) state" (Quoted in Zakaullah, *op. cit.*, p. 310).

[48] Sleeman notes with anger and sorrow that the ruler of Dholpur and the chiefs of Bundelkhand, though created by the British and could not conceivably benefit by the regime of Bahadur Shah, still designated themselves on their Seal of office as the "Slave and creature of that Imperial Warrior for the Faith of Islam" (*Rambles and Recollections*, p. 309).

[49] As an illustration: The leaders of the popular army in Lucknow made it clear to Mirza Birjis Qadr, who was anxious to ascend the throne of Oudh, that his status and position were to be determined by the Emperor of Delhi. And when the royal *firman* confirming his appointment as ruler of Oudh, arrived, it was received with the traditional salute of 21 guns. Similarly, when the question of coinage came up for discussion, the leaders of the army refused to accept the suggestion that the coins should be issued in the name of the ruler of Oudh. It was a royal prerogative of the Emperor of Delhi and was maintained as such. In fact, some of the higher functionaries of the Oudh government not excluding commander-in-chief and governor, were directly appointed by the central government and the official reporter—the *akhbar-navis*—of Bahadur Shah was always present at the Lucknow Durbar to report to the headquarters any and every breach of rules or conventions. It was because of these well-known conventions that no sooner was the government established in Oudh than a duly accredited emissary proceeded to Delhi with the customary *Nazar* and when on 16 November 1857, news of the Delhi massacres at the hands of the British was received in Lucknow, six or seven English prisoners were immediately killed as a measure of retaliation (Kamaluddin Haider, *Tarikh-i Awadh*, vol. II, pp. 225-40, 242, 262, *also* Ram Sahai, *Tamanna Tarikh-i-Suba Awadh*, p. 86).

[50] For his *firman* relating to adoption, see Kanhayya Lal, *Tarikh-i Baghawat*, etc., pp. 386-387.

[51] Bahadur Shah's firman, quoted in Kaye, *Indian Mutiny Papers, Misc.*, 726. (India Office, London).

[52] It is instructive to note that the emissary of Oudh mentioned earlier arrived in Delhi just when the British army was on the point of forcing its entry into the city and no one could have blamed him if he chose to return. But the emissary refused to go without delivering his *Nazar* to the Emperor in person and receiving a proper receipt from the royal treasury (Kamaluddin Haider, *op. cit.* pp. 240-242).

When in 1872, Liaqat Ali, the famous rebel leader who formed the provisional government at Allahabad in 1857, was brought to trial before a British Court and charged with waging war against Her Majesty, he justified his action with great dignity by declaring: "I considered myself subordinate to Bahadur Shah." He was condemned to transportation for life and cheerfully submitted to the sentence without a hint of retracting (*The Times*, London, June, 17, 1872).

[53] Kanhayya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[54] Jata Shankar Jha, *The Patna Conspiracy of* 1857, Indian Historical Records Proceedings, 1956.

[55] Few details are available about this valiant Moghul prince. He was a son of Mirza Nazim and a maternal grandson of Shah Alam. Sometime in 1856, that is, before outbreak of the revolt he had gone to Mecca on pilgrimage (*Haj*) and found to his great satisfaction on return that there was a countrywide revolt against the British. The "rebel" soldiers from Indore and the Afghan *Mujahids* from Gwalior and Dholpur joined him on the way and with this force he laid siege to Agra and then proceeded to Mewar. Delhi had probably fallen to the British when he was trying to contact the patriotic leaders in the capital. In any case, we find him proceeding to Lucknow *via* Farrukhabad and Shahjahanpur (which were the strongholds of the patriots), to join forces with Ahmadullah. He was invited and agreed to join the provisional government of Ahmadullah at Mohammadi. His movements thereafter are somewhat obscure. There is a legend that he crossed over to Russia (Kamaluddin Haider, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 468). Another version, which is more likely to be correct, traces him back to Mecca where we find him in the company of other distinguished Wahabi Ulema, for instance, Muhammed Ishaq, Haji Imdadullah etc., who had fled to Arabia after the collapse of the resistance movement. He is reported to have died in Arabia in 1895 (Intizamullah Shahabi, *Ghadar ke Chand Ulema*, p. 135).

[56] Malleson, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

[57] (Maulavi) Ahmadullah is a meteoric figure in the 1857 movement. He is a not even a northerner and hails from Madras, claiming descent from the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda. What is really significant is the fact that his father is reported to have

been a courtier of Tipu. In any case, he was probably educated in Hyderabad and then in London and returned to India after a visit to Iran and Arabia. His itinerary in India on return is a very long and interesting one. We find him visiting Sambhar, Jaipur, Tonk, in Rajputana, then Gwalior (presumably to visit his Pir, Mahrab Shah who was important enough to be mentioned on the coins of the Mohammadi government), Delhi and Agra, before settling down in Fyzabad. He was essentially a revivalist in his outlook and while in Delhi, he was in contact with persons like Sadruddin, the *Mufti*, and Fazle Haq, the *Sadr* of Delhi In Fyzabad, he was arrested by the British for his seditious activities and was actually waiting to be hanged when the rebellion broke out in Lucknow Henceforth the story of the resistance movement in Lucknow, is the record of his perseverence, courage, resourcefulness and of his military talents displayed in battles against the trained generals of the British army. When Delhi, Kanpur and Allahabad fell to the British, Lucknow kept the standard of national resistance flying, and when it was no more possible to defend it, Ahmadullah and the patriotic leaders from other centres fought in Shahjahanpur and finally entrenched themselves in Mohammadi with Ahmadullah as king and head of the new government. He now assumed the title of "Defender of the Faith of Muhammad" (*Hami-i-Din-i-Muhammad*) in true revivalist style and struck his coins in the name of Mahrab Shah, his spiritual preceptor. Before long, however, he was treacherously murdered on 15 June 1858 (Intizamullah Shahabi, *East India Company Aur Baghi Ulema*, pp 48-49).

[58] Little is known about the early life of Bakht Khan who was a Rohilla and claimed to be related to the royal family of Oudh through his mother. He is reported to have served the British army as an ordinary Risaldar in the Afghan war, then promoted to the rank of an artillery officer and finally as Subedar at Neemuch. After the outbreak of 1857 we find him in Bareilly for a while helping Nawab Bahadur Khan (the Rohilla leader of provisional government in Bareilly) in driving the British out of Rohilkhand From Bareilly he went to assist Nana Sahib in recruiting soldiers from Badaun and Farrukhabad. Finally he started for Delhi with 14,000 troops, and three regiments of cavalry, a park of artillery and a few lakhs of rupees in cash, appropriated from the Bareilly treasury (Kamaluddin Haider, op. cit.).

[59] Maulavi Sarfaraz Ali was a disciple of Karamat Ali of Jaunpur, the famous Khalifa of Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi and a leading figure in the Wahabi movement (Kamaluddin Haider op cit., p. 445)

[60] Among Wahabi volunteers who came to Delhi, those from Jaipur, Jhansi, Hissar, Bhopal including 6,000 from Nasirabad are specially mentioned The Wahabi centre on the Frontier offered to send 1,400 volunteers under the Akhund, the ruler of Swat who was known to be a patron and supporter of the Wahabis. Tonk sent a contingent of 600 with the promise of a further batch of 2,000. 200 men arrived from Najibabad, the old Rohilla centre

(now in Bijnor district in Uttar Pradesh) (Amir Ahmad Alavi, *op. cit.*, p. 242, see also Hasan Nizami, *Ghadar ki Subh-o Sham*, for details).

[61] When Delhi fell and Bahadur Shah was in panic, Bakht Khan explained to him the reason for the failure, *viz.*, the initial mistake they had committed in choosing to fight with the city of Delhi as the base and the heights of the Ridge in the hands of the enemy. He also related how Prince Mirza Moghal who was an amateur and a fool took up the command and made a mess of everything (Amir Ahmed Alavi, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139).

[62] When on 14 September 1857 British troops succeeded in forcing their way into Delhi the Wahabis mobilised the Muslims in the Jama Masjid area and in their initial attack, they drove out the advancing British columns, inflicting on them more than 400 casualties (Hasan Nizami, *Ghadar ki Subh-o Sham*, for details). Eventually, when the Jama Masjid area was occupied by the enemy there was nothing to see but piles of corpses for over a furlong right up to Kotwali (Zahir Dehlavi, *Dastan i Ghadar*, pp. 113-14). This explains why the Jama Masjid was not restored to the Muslims for a long time and the British authorities were planning to demolish this mosque as they had destroyed several others. Most of the houses of Muslims, however, in this area were destroyed (Ghalib's Urdu letters, for details).

[63] Ghalib, *Kulliyat-i Ghalib*, p. 192.

[64] Malleson is of opinion that the plan of *chappatis* was designed by Ahmadullah. Numerous *Bhavisyavanis* (or auguries of future events) were then in circulation and Zakaullah, in his *Tarikh (op. cit.)*, has quoted one in Persian verse which was probably meant to influence the Muslim intelligentsia.

[65] Ghalib, *op. cit.*

[66] This provided an excellent opportunity to British spies who took out a flag of their own in the name of Hanuman, the popular God of Hindus and hoisted it in the midst of the rebel camp on a *pipal* tree. The trick was only discovered when British guns started using it as target for their shells (Kamaluddin Haider, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-37, for details).

[67] Ali Muhammad Shad, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[68] Wazir Khan came originally from an Afghan family of Bihar and went to Murshidabad for his English education. He was then sent to England for the study of medicine and returned as a qualified surgeon. He was then appointed as surgeon to a Calcutta hospital and later at Agra, where he came in touch with Ahmadullah and formed an association (Majlis) of the Ulema. He was fond of the study of Greek and Hebrew and used to engage in polemics with Christian missionaries. In 1857 when he arrived in Delhi he was nominated to the state council of Bahadur Shah and occupied a similar position in the government at Mohammadi.

[69] Ashraf, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[70] Husain Ahmad, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 43-44.

[71] *Manazir Ahsan Gilani-Sawanehr Qasmi*, vol II p 221. It is interesting to note that Husain Ahmad, himself a congressman and the principal of Deoband seminary recently declined the title conferred on him by the President of the Indian Republic.

[72] Husain Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[73] Muhammad Ali Kasuri in *Tarikh-wa Siyasiyat*, 1951-52. See bibliography.

[74] Also called *al Thaurat-al Hind*. See bibliography.

[75] He says "I have done no wrong save that I have no feelings for the British (or for other *Kafirs*) and I can't be sympathetic towards them. This is strictly in accordance with the well-known injunction of the Koran ordering the believers not to live on terms of amity with them (Abdus Shahid Khan Sherwani, *Baghi Hindustan*, p. 488). Accused of signing the *Fatwa of Jihad* in Delhi, he frankly acknowledged the charge although he could have been discharged for want of evidence.

[76] W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, Dedication.

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The Bengali Intelligentsia And The Revolt

BENOY GHOSE

An attempt has been made in this paper to explore the background of the apathetic attitude of the Bengali intelligentsia to the rebellion of 1857. This apathy has been a perplexing problem to many students of Bengal's social history and none has been able to offer any satisfactory explanation of it. It cannot be explained only by the mid-nineteenth century sense of "loyalty" of the intelligentsia. Theirs was never slavish loyalty but that of a class of educated and intelligent men, fully conscious of their own interest and their historic role in the new society.

The loyalty of the Bengali intelligentsia was, therefore, conditional. So long as the British rulers acted in favour of the class interest of the intelligentsia, their loyalty was assured but not otherwise. Since the adulthood of the first generation of the modern Bengali intelligentsia in the thirties of the last century, there had been several such clashes with the British rulers and on many occasions they had shown their courage. It would be unjust and untrue to say, therefore, that the Bengali intelligentsia of the eighteen-fifties merely echoed the sentiments of their rulers in expressing their hostile attitude towards the rebels. They had their own point of view and own say in the matter. It would be the chief aim of this paper to find out that point of view and to judge in the light of relevant materials the reasons for it.

I

Even after a century of controversy over the possible causes and the real character of the 1857 revolt historians have not been able to achieve agreement. If one scans the columns of *Friend of India, Englishman, Bengal Hurkaru, Calcutta Review, Hindu Patriot* and other newspapers and periodicals of 1857-58, one would be surprised to find that the rebellion of 1857 had been primarily attributed to socio-religious causes, and the *politico-economic* causes had been considered secondary. This is important, particularly in view of the fact that the attitude of the Bengali intelligentsia was more determined by this understanding of the primary causes of the rebellion, than by anything else. The politico-economic causes, though not entirely ignored, were assessed from the historical point of view and found to contradict the interest of the rising urban middle-class, represented partially by the Bengali intelligentsia We shall first of deal with the alleged primary causes of the rebellion.

With the rapid spread of the rebellion in April and May Lord Canning issued a proclamation which was published in the *Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary* dated May 18, 1857. It runs thus:

"The Governor-General of India in Council has warned the army of Bengal, that the tales by which the men of certain regiments have been led to suspect, that offence to their religion or injury to their caste is meditated by the Goverment of India, are malicious falsehoods.

"The Governor-General in Council has learnt, that this suspicion continues to be propagated by designing and evil-minded men, not only in the army, but amongst other classes of the people....

"Once more, then, the Governor-General in Council warns all classes against the deceptions that are practised on them...."

The need for issuing such a proclamation would not have arisen had there been no cause for anxiety for the

British rulers about the question of governmental interference in matters of religion and caste. Since the days of Warren Hastings it had been their settled policy to make all possible compromises with traditional social and religious customs and to go slow with changes and reforms. They were looking forward to a smooth and peaceful "change over" which could only be possible in the conservative society of the times, by following a policy of least interference in the traditional social set-up. It would not be exaggerating to say that most of the social, educational and religious reforms of the early nineteenth century were initiated by the rising Bengal bourgeoisie and intelligentsia and not by the British rulers. The need for issuing the above proclamation was, therefore, really serious from the point of view of the rulers and the causes apprehended therein of the revolt were also real, though they were not the only ones.

Major-General H. T. Tucker, for many years Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army, wrote a letter to *The Times*, London, on 19 July 1857, on the possible causes of the rebellion. His letter is a valuable document, as it gives the view of one of the most experienced superior officers on the Bengal establishment. Tucker wrote :

"Sir, at the time when the whole country is speculating as to the real causes of the mutiny in Bengal.... it becomes a simple act of justice to offer a few brief words of explanation, such as I trust, will produce conviction.... The natives generally, and the native army in particular, have been recently strongly impressed, however they came by it, with the idea, that it was intended to subvert their religion, and to make the army converts to Christianity. .. The recent legislation, so comparatively rapid on questions intimately connected with the feelings, and the religion of the natives, together with the wholesale changes introduced into the system of native education in Bengal, with the imprudent and injudicious conduct of certain weak and foolish bigots among us, have been amply sufficient to dis-

pose the sepoys for the reception of the strongest impressions adverse to our rule. The priestly and religious feeling is....the dominating principle among the sepoys; in fact, in almost every regiment the Brahmanical influence.... has been for years and years dangerously great."

I would adduce one more statement in this connection, by one of the most important Indian eye witnesses of the revolt, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. As it comes from the pen of an outstanding leader of the Muslim community of India, who justly felt more offended than the Hindus during the rebellion, and as one who had been in the storm-centres of the rebellion outside Bengal, Syed Ahmad's statement acquires an importance of its own In *An Eassy on the Causes of the Indian Revolt* Syed Ahmad mentioned this fear of religious interference as one of the most important causes of the rebellion.[1] He wrote :

"There is no doubt that all persons, whether intelligent or ignorant, respectable or otherwise, believed that the Government was really and sincerely desirous of interfering with the religion and custom of the people, converting them all whether Hindus or Mohammedans to Christianity, and forcing them to adopt European manners and habits. This was perhaps the most important of all causes of the rebellion....

"The missionaries too had introduced a new mode of preaching the Gospel. Religious tracts containing questions and answers now began to be printed and distributed to the people... of their own accord they used to frequent Mohammedan mosques and Hindu temples, as well as fairs, for the purpose of preaching, to which no one dared object for fear of the authorities. In certain districts, moreover, they were even allowed a chaprasi or policeman from the *thannah* (police office) to attend them. These persons did not content themselves with merely preaching the Gospel, but used to allude to the pious men and sacred places of other religions in a highly disrespectful manner, which gave much offence and pain to their hearers, and served to sow

in the hearts of the people the seeds of disaffection to the Government."

Sir Syed Ahmad quoted a letter by a certain W E Edmond of Calcutta, the purport of which was that as all sections of the country were being rapidly united by railways, steam vessels and electric telegraph, it was time to consider seriously whether such unity of religion also was desirable or not. That religion is Christianity which can unite the different sects and communities in India. Commenting on this letter which was circulated in Calcutta among the general public and the government employees, Syed Ahmad wrote :

"I speak nothing but truth when I state that the receipt of these letters so *terrified* the Natives that they were as people struck blind, or from under whose feet the ground had suddenly slipped away. All felt covinced that the hour so long anticipated had at last arrived, and that the servants of the Government first. and then the whole population would have to embrace Christianity."

In addition to these facts, the history of evolution of Bengal Army, its enlisting regulations and composition, should also be taken into consideration. Everybody knows that Clive raised the battalion which fought under him at Plassey and which formed the nucleus of the Bengal Army. "Recruited almost exclusively from the warlike population of the north-west....it was mainly composed of high-caste men, who were ready to face any danger, but who disdained the humble duties of the soldier, while the regiments of Madras and Bombay, in which men of different races and castes met and fraternised were more generally useful and more amenable to control."[2] The enlisting regulations of the Bengal Army contained the following paragraph :[3]

"Especial care must be taken to reject all men of inferior castes, such as petty shop-keepers, writers, barbers, oilmen, shepherds, thatchers, pawnsellers, gram-parchers, porters, palkee-bearers sweetmeat makers, gardeners and many others habitually employed in menial occupations."

The composition of a Bengal regiment in general was as follows : Brahmins 350, Rajputs 350, Mussalmans 150 and high-caste Hindus 150.

An army so composed could not but develop strong susceptibility to all sorts of religious propaganda and the Bengal Army did actually develop that. After a lengthy analysis of all divergent views on "the Indian Crisis of 1857," the *Calcutta Review* (December 1857), therefore, concluded that the "primary cause of the Bengal Mutiny has been the utter want of discipline and the spirit of insubordination inseparable from the Brahmanic caste system upheld in the Bengal Army."

The socio religious causes of the revolt mentioned above and the high-caste non-Bengali composition of the Bengal Army had been extremely important factors in shaping the attitude in general of the rising Bengali middle-class and of the intelligentsia in particular. The successive social and educational reform movements in the first half of the nineteenth century had been won by the rising Bengali middle-classes and intelligentsia, through a series of pitched battles. Rammohan Roy and his associates, the Derozians of Young Bengal as they were called, the Brahmo Sabhaites and the Vidyasagarites fought these battles like heroes against the most powerful combination of all forces of social and religious reaction. A glimpse of the intensity of these social battles can be had from their writings and utterances. A few of them are worth mentioning here.

The two most important papers of Young Bengal were *The Enquirer* (English) and *Gyananweshan* (Bengali, meaning search for knowledge). The ideal for which Young Bengal fought is reflected in the names of their papers. The editor of *The Enquirer* was Krishnamohan Banerji and of *Gyananweshan* was Dakshina Ranjan Mukherjee, two leading Derozians *The Enquirer*[4] wrote about the fury of the orthodox Hindu community in July 1831, as follows :

"The rage of persecution is still vehement. The bigots

are up with their thunders of fulmination. The heat of the *Gurum Sabha** is violent, and they know not what they are doing. Excommunication is the cry of the fanatic: We hope perseverance will be the Liberal's answer. The *Gurum Sabha* is high; let it ascend to the boiling point. The Orthodox are in a rage; let them burst forth into a flame. Let the Liberal's voice be like that of the Roman, a Roman knows not only to act but to suffer. Blown be the trumpet of excommunication from house to house. Be some hundreds cast out of society they will form a party, an object devoutly to be wished by us."

Though Krishnamohan himself hailed from an orthodox Bengali Brahmin family, he did not hesitate to make scathing attacks on his own community. He wrote a drama, *The Persecuted*, in the preface of which he remarked:[5]

"The inconsistencies and the blackness of the influential members of the Hindu community have been depicted before their eyes. They will now clearly perceive the viles and the tricks of the Brahmins and thereby be able to guard themselves against them."

One of the characters in the play, Banylal says:

"When knowledge has begun its march, Hindooism must fall and must fall with noise. Reformation must come on and excite heart-burning jealousies among men.... Prejudice and Liberalism cannot long reign under the same roof without a rupture."

Such was the tone of the young reformers of Bengal against the thunderings of the orthodox Hindus. It was impatient, aggressive and uncompromising. There was hardly any wisdom or foresight in it, but the sincerity, zeal and devotion of the reformers were unquestionable. When reform meant religious reform and religion was the main pillar of society, it was but natural (though wrong tactically) for the young Derozians to single out "religion" as the target of their direct attack. This attitude to religion

* The *Dharma Sabha* of the orthodox Hindus was sarcastically called *Gurum Sabha* for its thunderings against the young reformers.

of the Derozians created a historic opportunity for the missionaries for converting some of them to Christianity.

And powerful personalities like Rev. Duff were then active in the field Brilliant young men of respectable families like Krishnamohan, Madhusudan Dutt (the famous poet) and others were converted to Christianity

Such conversions went on. Lectures and debates on Christianity were arranged, in which the college students and educated people participated in large numbers. The social commotions, depicted by Duff were ignored by the over enthusiastic missionaries. The Hindu College authorities took the alarm and thought that their religion was in danger. They, therefore, ruled that any student attending the lectures and debates, would be expelled from the college. The events were leading to a climax in the eighteen-forties and fifties. The situation turned so serious that the Brahmo Sabhaites and other reformers meeting in Tattwabodhini under the leadership of Debendra Nath Tagore (father of Rabindranath Tagore) even thought it expedient at that time to forge a united front with the orthodox Dharma Sabhaites, their enemies, for fighting the missionaries.[6] A series of editorial articles appeared in *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, strongly condemning the activities of the missionaries[7] All these attempts failed to check the activities of the missionaries. They were even encouraged to call a general conference of all missionaries of Bengal in Calcutta in September 1855, which concluded with an appeal to the various missionary societies in Europe and America for more help and cooperation with men and money for pursuing missionary activities more vigorously.

While trying to curb these excesses of the missionaries, the reformers of Bengal did not allow their struggle for social and educational reforms to be side-tracked into an anti-religious struggle More attention was focused on social problems like the remarriage of Hindu widows, prohibition of child-marriage, kulinism and polygamy, the emancipation and education of women, etc. Pandit Iswar

Chandra Vidyasagar became the central figure in the social movements of the fifties. Mainly under his inspiration and of one of his colleagues Akhoy Kumar Dutta, regular campaigns in favour of widow remarriage, female education and against polygamy and child-marriage, were launched through the columns of *Tattwabodhini Patrika* and other papers.[8] Vidyasagar did not direct his attack against the Christian missionaries or the orthodox Hindus. His weapons were reasons and humanism. He had no bias for any religion other than Hinduism and he knew that all religions had their own dogmas and superstitions. In this he differed from his co-reformers the Derozians and the Brahmo Sabhaites. This essentially secular and balanced attitude of Vidyasagar enabled him to exercise a sobering influence on the social movements of his time, particularly on the anti religious extremism of the Derozians. But the movements launched by him provoked the orthodox Dharma Sabhaites to break all bounds of sobriety and to attack the reformers as a band of heretics, misguided by the mischievous padris. Attacks led to counter attacks and the heat of the controversy, mainly religious, reached boiling point after the remarriage of Hindu widows was legalised in the Act XV of 1856 and the first widow remarriage under the authority of the Act was pompously celebrated by the "progressives" in Calcutta in December, 1856.

In the beginning of 1857, the whole society was in ferment in Bengal. The orthodox Hindus and the general mass of ignorant and superstitious people got alarmed at the spectacular successes of the reformers. The citadel of orthodox Hinduism was now actually on the point of collapse. Some of its massive pillars were being pulled down one by one by Rammohan, the Derozians, the Brahmo Sabhaites and the Vidyasagarites. The Dharma Sabhaites looked upon this as nothing but a conspiracy of the British rulers and their agents, the missionaries, to convert the entire people to Christianity by subverting their own religion. The noise of protests rose higher and higher

In the midst of this noise, confusion and commotion the revolt broke out in Barrackpore, a few miles away from the storm centre of Calcutta, over the suspicion that cow's and hog's lard was smeared on cartridges. Thus it is that the grievances of the sepoys assumed a religious shape and colour. The cry of religious interference was loudly raised by the sepoys just when the intelligentsia was fighting against that same cry of the orthodox Hindus in the city. Being fully aware of the high-caste Hindustani and Rajput composition of the Bengal Army and of their proverbial religious fanaticism and orthodoxy, the Bengali intelligentsia could not but consider them as the allies of social reaction. They had, therefore, no other alternative, in the circumstances then prevailing, but to oppose it. To support the rebels and their cause would have amounted at that time to a negation of all principles and ideals for which the intelligentsia had fought for over half-a-century. They stood by the British rulers because they had won their battles against the immense resources of reaction mainly with British support. At the same time it should also be remembered that by opposing the mutineers and their battle-cry of religious reaction the Bengali intelligentsia was also opposing the stand of the conservative British rulers, who were then criticising bitterly "liberals" among them for overdoing with social reforms and provoking the mutiny.

II

There were politico-economic and sociological reasons also for which the Bengali intelligentsia had opposed the 1857 revolt. Regarding the "selection of elites" in modern society, Karl Mannheim says: [9]

"If one calls to mind the essential methods of selecting elites, which up to the present have appeared on the historical scene, three principles can be distinguished: selection on the basis of *blood, property* and *achievement*. Aristocratic society, especially after it had entrenched itself, chose its elites primarily on the blood principle. Bourgeois

society gradually introduced as a supplement, the principle of wealth, a principle which also obtained for the intellectual elite, inasmuch as education was more or less available only to the offspring of the well to-do. It is, of course, true that the principle of achievement was combined with the two other principles in earlier periods, but it is an important contribution of modern democracy (as long as it is vigorous) that the achievement principle increasingly tends to become the criterion of social success."

The first half of the nineteenth century can be called the earlier period of the modern bourgeois society in Bengal and in the method of selecting elites or intelligentsia the principle of "achievement" was combined with the two other principles of "blood" and "property." Of the three, at least the principle of "blood" was definitely becoming obsolete in the second and third generation of the Bengali elites at the time of the rebellion. The principles of wealth and achievement were becoming the ruling criteria of selecting elites in Bengali society. The great majority of the Bengali intellectuals came from well-to-do upper middle class families, working their way up from the lower middle-class.

They had raised their economic status by trade and commerce and their intellectual status by the new English education. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Debendra Nath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghose, Piyari Chand Mitra, Kishore Chand Mitra, Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Hara Chandra Ghosh, Rasik Krishan Mullick, Radha Nath Sikdar, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Rajendralal Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Lal Behari De, Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Dakshina Ranjan Mukherjee, Girish Chandra Ghose, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and some others in their early twenties like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Keshab Chandra Sen, Kristo Das Pal, Dwarkanath Mitra, comprised the main group of intellectuals during the revolt—the majority of whom belonged to such families.

Some of them were descendants of the new Bengali zamindars, a class of upstarts created by the Permanent

Settlement out of the ruins of the old landed aristocracy, actually *banians* and *mutsuddis* (brokers and agents) investing their huge fortunes in land, becoming absentees and residing in the city to swell the rank of the new urban aristocracy. The principle of wealth in the selection of elites was so decisive and important that some of the outstanding Bengali intellectuals like Debendranath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghose and Piyari Chand Mitra, spent much of their efforts in building up fortunes by economic enterprises.

Intellectual entrepreneurs were also becoming economic entrepreneurs in Bengal. In the new urban milieu where birth and estate were no longer decisive, and where personal prestige was increasingly gaining importance, intellectual eminence too might be the means of lifting one's status in society, and could thus have far-reaching social consequences. Persons like Vidyasagar, hailing from poor middle-class families, had lifted their status by this means. But the principle of wealth also was never ignored even by them. Vidyasagar, too, had to start an independent business of printing and publishing to maintain the balance of the two criteria of wealth and intellect. He became one of the pioneers in this trade in Bengal.

I would cite only one instance, and a very important one, for illustrating the operation of this "achievement" principle in our society and its reactions. Syed Ahmad, in his essay on the causes of the rebellion (already quoted), mentions the following as one of the important causes of dissatisfaction of people:[10]

"It cannot be questioned that the examination system enabled the Government to obtain the services of the most talented men in the country; but it must also be admitted that by its operation, such persons were frequently promoted to high offices as were looked upon by their countrymen with the utmost contempt. No regard was paid in granting certificates of qualification to family connections, high birth, or respectability of position."

Commenting on this point of Syed Ahmad, Richard

Temple wrote in a Memorandum (appended to the text of the essay):

"He says that fewer natives of birth, family and connections are employed and a strict system of examination has given an almost exclusive preference to talent alone. In this there is much truth. It may be quite practicable to give a better scope than heretofore to the upper classes, while certain standard of qualification is insisted on."

It is evident that the "achievement" principle in the selection of the middle-classes and intelligentsia was operating with sufficient vigour and creating far-reaching social reactions. It was spreading discontent in the ranks of nobles and aristocrats of the old social order and their pampered descendants, who saw in the 1857 revolt a chance to regain their lost social status, based on birth and estate. Not the Bengali intelligentsia only, but the educated middle-class of India in general, both Hindus and Muslims, Bengalees and non-Bengalees, visualised the possibility of the success of the 1857 revolt as a return of the old social order, with all its reactionary principles and ideals. Lt.-Governor Halliday was speaking a historical truth when he said:[11]

"Those who have imbibed the greatest share of English ideas and knowledge have taken the least part in the recent troubles and atrocities... I know scarcely one authenticated instance of a really educated native—I will not say joining but even sympathising with the rebels."

It is sometimes argued that educated Hindus only, and not the Muslims, opposed the 1857 revolt. Admitting that the Muslims felt more offended than the Hindus during the mutiny, Syed Ahmad Khan refuted this statement in a pamphlet, *An Account of the Loyal Mohammedans in India* (Part II). He intended to prove in the pamphlet that no educated or respectable Muslim took part in the revolt and those who called themselves Moulavis in 1857-58 were "impostors."

It was, therefore, not a question of Hindus or Muslims, Bengalees or non-Bengalees, which was important in the matter of opposition to the sepoy revolt. It was a question

of defending the socio-economic interests of the educated middle-class as a whole, created under the new social conditions of British rule in India. The motive powers of free money and free intellect, to which they owed their origin and growth, they thought, would have been absent in the society envisaged by the feudal leaders of the revolt.

The growing political consciousness of the educated middle-class was also partly responsible for shaping its hostile attitude towards the revolt. They were conscious of their political role in the society which had created them. The age of the middle-classes was dawning everywhere in Europe, including England, the land of their rulers, under the banner of liberty, equality and fraternity. Since the days of Rammohan, the educated middle-class of Bengal, had been rejoicing publicly at every victory of their fellows in Europe and America.

When the great Reform Bills were introduced in the House of Commons in England in the thirties of the last century, and the English middle-classes achieved significant victories through a series of social reforms after the Industrial Revolution, the Bengali intelligentsia greeted the news with cries of "Hail, freedom, Hail!" When the news of reforms reached Calcutta, sometime in July 1831, the leading organ of the Derozians wrote passionately on it. Rev. Duff witnessed this reaction and wrote:[12]

"The next number of *The Enquirer* in particular seemed as if penned with fire. All that is enchantingly heart-stirring in the story of Grecian and Roman liberty was rapturously rehearsed. And in the Reform Bill of England was traced the germ of Reformation throughout the world. 'Hail, freedom Hail!' rang through impassioned sentences."

These utterances bear eloquent testimony to the political consciousness of the educated middle-class of Bengal. They are also expressions of their wishes, for the fulfilment of which they were longing and looking forward. *The Hindoo Patriot* was writing seriously about it during the rebellion:[13]

"The Bengalees never aspired to the glory of leading

armies to battle.... Their pursuits and their triumphs are entirely civil. A strong and versatile intellect enables them to think deeply and to think farsightedly.... They are in hopes that by lawful and constitutional appeals to the good sense and justice of the English people sitting by representatives in a sovereign Council or Parliament, they, when the fitting moment arrives, will rise yet further in the scale of equality with their foreign rulers and divide with them the honour and the responsibility of administering the affairs of the largest and the most well-established empire in Asia."

They thought that there would be no scope for such "lawful and constitutional appeals" to the feudal lords of India, who were striving to wrest their lost power from the British rulers, and no such "fitting moment" would ever arrive in a social order dominated by kings and nobles when the "middle-classes" would be able to rise to the level of equality with their rulers.

The new middle-classes created under British rule saw no hope in the 1857 revolt. Their hope lay in the success of the middle-classes in Europe and in England, in the political, economic and social fields. They found the representatives of these "middle-classes" in the British rulers and thought it more prudent in their own class-interest to follow them, than to back the wrong "feudal" horse. Out of this came their unequivocal condemnation of the rebels of 1857.

NOTES

1 Syed Ahmad Khan, *An Eassy on the Causes of the Indian Revolt*, pp. 15-8.
2 T. Rice Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, (5th ed., 1904).
3 Quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, December 1857, p. 48.
4 The old file of *The Enquirer* has not yet been traced. Some of its contents have been quoted by Alexander Duff in his book *India and India Mission*, (1840). The quotations are from Rev. Duff's

book, pp. 648–649, 652–653.

5 Baboo Krishna Mohana Banerjee, *The Persecuted*, or Dramatic Scenes, Illustrative of the Present state of Hindoo society in Calcutta, (Calcutta, 1831).

6 Debendra Nath Tagore's Bengali autobiography, *Atmacharit*, ed. by Satish Vidyabhushan, Ch. 13.

7 *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, 1st Jaista, 1767 Saka (1845), 1st Paus, 1767 Saka (1845).

8 *Ibid*, 1st Bhadra, 1767 Saka (1845), on Child-marriage and polygamy; 1st Kartick, 1768 Saka (1846), on Female education. Falgun, 1776 Saka (1854), Vidyasagar's signed article on Widow remarriage; Chaitra, 1776 Saka (1854), Akhoy Kumar Dutta's article on Widow remarriage; Agrahayan, 1777 Saka (1855), on Widow remarriage; Chaitra, (1855), on Polygamy; Bhadra, 1778 Saka (1856), on Polygamy; Pous, 1778 Saka (1856), on Widow remarriage; Pous, 1779 Saka (1857), on Widow remarriage.

9 Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 89.

10 Syed Ahmad Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.

11 Speech at the distribution of Diplomas to the students of Medical College, Calcutta, on the 19th April, 1858. The speech editorially defended in the *Calcutta Monthly Review*, May 1858: "The Mutiny and the Educated Natives."

12 Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 648.

13 *The Hindoo Patriot*, June 4, 1857, "The Sepoy Mutiny and its action upon the people of Bengal."

1857 In Our History

P. C. JOSHI

I. SEPOY MUTINY OR NATIONAL REVOLT ?

INDIA this year celebrates the centenary of the national uprising of 1857, a historic landmark in our national evolution, the great event which patriotic India has regarded as the foundation of its modern national liberation movement. Yet this very event, has been bogged down in the controversy whether it was a mere "sepoy mutiny" or a national revolt !

The true Indian side of the story is not fully known. It is not only that leaving historical records behind was not the traditional Indian habit but that the conditions under British rule at that time were such that anyone attempting it risked his life. The few contemporary Indians who wrote on 1857 did so for the British. The dominant British attitude is revealed in an article entitled "The Bengali Press, How to Deal with It," published on August 9, 1896, in *Pioneer*, a very influential British organ of the times :

"We know how Englishmen within the memory of living men treated their own newspaper writers ... If a gentle and graceful writer forgot himself so far as to call the Prince Regent 'an Adonis of forty' he got two years' 'hard.' If a clergymen praised the French Revolution and advocated Parliamentary reform and fair representation, he was condemned to work in iron manacles, to wade in sludge among the vilest criminals.

"The writer advocated the infliction of the same punishment on an Indian who dared to write on the Indian Mutiny of 1857."[1]

Indians thus had no say in this controversy but our rebel ancestors with their heroic deeds and by shedding their warm blood had made their contribution more eloquent than words. And that in this solemn year of the 1857 centenary eminent Indian historians should rake up the controversy, write new books making concessions to the British imperialist viewpoint is sad. It only shows how strong the influence of British historiography on Indian scholars is and what great weaknesses in Indian national thought have yet to be overcome.

This controversy was first raised inside the British ruling class itself. The defenders of the East India Company underplayed the significance of the Indian revolt by characterising it as a mere sepoy mutiny to hide the weaknesses of the Company rule. The opponents of the East India Company, the representatives of the British industrial bourgeoisie showed up the inadequacy of the above characterisation and argued that it was a national rebellion. The conclusion they drew was that the Company rule should be ended and the Crown take over India. Lord Canning, the Governor-General, not to displease either side took a middle position!

Kaye, the British historian of the 1857 revolt, states that Canning "asked himself whether it could be only a military mutiny that he was combating. It did not seem as though the origins of such a commotion were to be found only in the unaided instincts of the soldiery. It might be that the activities then discernible were purely military activities, but it did not follow that external influence had not been at work to produce the state of mind that was developing such terrible results....

"He soon ceased to speak of the mutiny and called it a 'rebellion'—a 'revolt.' Early in the year he had felt disposed to attach some importance to the idea of political

causes but, as he wrote, on more than one occasion 'not much.' Now his uncertainty upon this point began to disappear and he wrote to the Indian Minister at home that he had not a doubt that the rebellion had been fomented 'by the Brahmins on religious pretences and by others for political motives.' The Indian Empire was in flames."[2]

Karl Marx, in one of his unsigned despatches to the *New York Daily Tribune* quotes and comments upon Disraeli's speech of July 27, 1857 as the leader of the Opposition. "Until the last ten years, he (Disraeli) affirmed the British Empire in India was founded on the old prnciple of *divide et impera*—but the principle was put into action by respecting the different nationalities of which India consisted, by avoiding to tamper with their relgion and by protecting their landed gentry. The sepoy army served as a safety valve to absorb the turbulent spirits of the country. But of late years a new principle has been adopted in the Government of India—the principle of destroying nationality. The principle has been realised by the forcible destruction of native princes, the disturbance of the settlement of property and tampering with the religion of the people.

"Mr. Disraeli... arrives at the conclusion that the present Indian disturbances is not a military mutiny but a national revolt, of which the sepoys are the active instrument only. He ends his harangue advising the Government to turn their attention to the internal improvement of India, instead of pursuing its present course of oppression."[3]

Let us recall the opinions of contemporary British historians and chroniclers. In those days they wrote more plainly, without the self-righteous, sanctimonious airs the later British experts in India assumed.

Justin McCarthy stated: "The fact was that throughout the greater part of northern and north-western provinces of the Indian peninsula there was a rebellion of the native races against the English power. It was not the sepoy alone who rose in revolt—it was not by any means a merely military mutiny. It was a combination of military grievance,

national hatred, and religious fanaticism against the English occupation of India. The native princes and the native soldiers were in it. The Mohammedan and the Hindu forgot their old religious antipathies to join against the Christian... "[4]

Charles Ball wrote: "At length the torrent overflowed the banks, and saturated the moral soil of India. It was then expected that these waves would overwhelm and destroy the entire European element and that, when the torrent of rebellion should again confine itself within bounds, patriotic India, freed from its alien rulers, would bow only to the independent sceptre of a native prince. The movement, now, assumed a more important aspect. It became the rebellion of a whole people incited to outrage by resentment for imaginary wrongs and sustained in their delusions by hatred and fanaticism."[5]

Sir W. Russell, the famous correspondent of the London *Times* wrote: "Here we had not only a servile war and a sort of *Jacquerie* combined, but we had a war of religion, a war of race, and a war of revenge, of hope, of national determination to shake off the yoke of a stranger and to re-establish the full power of native chiefs and the full sway of native religion."[6]

Colonel Malleson wrote a three-volume history of the revolt on the basis of the "sepoy mutiny" thesis. Eight years after the suppression of the revolt, he again visited India, talked with people in various walks of life on the events of the 1857 revolt and admitted the dominance of the national factor behind the uprising in his later smaller work, *The Indian Mutiny of* 1857, published in 1891. "Circumstances had proved to me that extraneous causes were at work to promote an ill feeling, a hatred not personal but national, in the minds of men who for a century had been our truest and most loyal servants."[7]

Let us also examine some significant comments by British historians on the revolt in Oudh which was the storm-centre of the 1857 uprising McLeod Innes observes that

"at least the struggle of the Oudhians must be characterised as a war of independence."[8] A letter written by the secret committee of the Court of Directors to the Governor-General on 19th April, 1858 states: "War in Oudh has derived much of its popular character from the sudden dethronement of the crown and the summary settlement of the revenue which deprived a large number of landlords of their lands.

"Under the circumstances hostilities which have been carried on in Oudh have rather the character of legitimate war than that of rebellion."[9]

The struggle in Oudh was the most developed, had the broadest base and deepest roots, and swept everything before it but it was not qualitatively different from the struggle in other places. The difference was one of degree only. The enemy, the problem, the issues, the participants and the leaders were the same or alike. In such circumstances to agree that in Oudh it was a war of independence but not in the rest of the provinces is neither common sense nor history. On the other hand scientific methodology demands that the true character of an uprising in a transitional period like India in 1857 be studied where it assumed the most advanced stage as in Oudh.

Another test to decide on the character of the rebellion would be to find out who and how many had remained loyal to the British government and what was the attitude of the people at large towards these loyalists.

If one draws up the list of Indian officials serving in the rebel districts who remained loyal to the British government, we will find that the bulk of them joined the rebel cause. This is borne out by the reports of district magistrates sent to the Governor-General reviewing the course of the rebellion.

About Kanpur the District Magistrate, J. W. Sherer wrote on January 3, 1859, "The infidelity also of the Omlah (Indian officials) doubtless, had a very bad influence in the district. To a man almost, with the Deputy Collector at their head, they quietly changed sides and acquiesced in the new

administration. Ram Lall, the Deputy Collector, took a very active part in attempting to organise the Nana's Government. This marked treachery, a treachery which ruined the whole body of officials, I punished with death on my first arrival."[10]

About Jhansi, J. W. Pinkney, the Commissioner, wrote on November 20, 1858, "The conduct of the Omlah and subordinate native officials was generally either bad or neutral."[11]

About Saharanpur, F. Williams, the Commissioner, reported to William Muir, the Secretary to Government of North Western Provinces on November 15, 1858, "The utter supineness of the police, who throughout literally did nothing. They appear to have come to an understanding with the people that neither should interfere with the other; that if the villagers permitted the police to remain quietly at their stations and draw their pay, the villagers may commit what crimes they pleased, without any attempt at prevention on their part."[12]

Rev. Kennedy stated: "Revolt had swept before it, in many cases, all regard to personal interest and all attachment to the former master. The imputation of remaining faithful to the Government in such circumstances had been intolerable. It is well-known that the few sepoys who have remained in our services are deemed outcastes, not only by their comrades but by their caste people in general. These even say they cannot venture to go to their homes; for, not only would they be reproached and denied brotherly offices but their very lives would be in danger."[13]

If the sepoys and other persons serving the British could be so successfully socially boycotted, is it not decisive evidence that the 1857 revolt was national and popular in character?

In spite of all this we find that Dr. R. C. Mazumdar states: "The failure of the outbreak may also be attributed to the fact that neither the leaders nor the sepoys and the masses were inspired by any high ideal."[14]

Let us examine not some well known but least known cases, not from important centres of the rebellion but from isolated outlying areas, not when the revolutionary upsurge was going up and it was easier to be heroic but when it was visibly going down.

After the fall of Delhi and Lucknow the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, planned that three field armies encircle and drive the Oudh and Doab insurgents towards Fategarh to be finally annihilated. General Walpole began the march from Kanpur, but found that a small insurgent band compelled him to halt at Etawah. "Few in number, armed only with muskets they were animated by a spirit of despair—by a determination to die martyrs to their cause. Walpole reconnoitred the place. It was, for a place to stop an army, insignificant and could easily be stormed. Yet to storm it in the face of its occupants would cost valuable life and it seemed that easier and less costly means were available. These easy means were at first tried. Hand grenades were thrown in; an attempt was made to smoke the occupants with burning straw. But all in vain. Through their loopholes, the rebels poured in a constant and effective fire on the assailants and, for three hours, kept them at bay. At last it was resolved to blow up that place. For this purpose Bourchier, aided by Scratchley of the Engineers, made a mine with a number of his gun-cartridges. The explosion of this conferred upon the defenders the martyrs' honours they coveted. It buried them in the ruins." [16]

On February 25, 1858 the strong Nepali and British armies crossed the Ghogra and marched towards Ambarpur. On the way there was a strong fort in the thick jungle. Its strategic value was great and it was manned by only 34 insurgents. In was stormed. "It was defended with so much vigour and resolution that the assailants lost seven men killed and forty-three wounded before they gained possession of it. The defenders died all at their posts." [19]

On December 15 a local rising took place at Kolhapur

but it was quelled. While the rebels were being blown from the mouths of the guns the British officer Jacob offered them their lives in case they gave out the names of their comrades. He failed. Later analysing his experiences, he wrote:

"But it is difficult to describe the wonderful secrecy with which the whole conspiracy was conducted and the forethought supplying the schemes, and the caution with which each group of conspirators worked apart, concealing the connecting links, and instructing them with just sufficient information for the purpose in view. And all this was equalled only by the fidelity with which they adhered to each other."[17]

When the British sacked Lucknow some of the Begums fell into their hands. The captain asked these ladies, "Do not you think that the struggle has come to an end?" They replied "On the contrary, we are sure that in the long run you will be beaten."[18] Such self-confidence even after a big defeat was a sign of the revolutionary spirit that had been awakened by the national uprising.

When we come to the question of the leadership of the revolt Dr. Mazumdar is so much obsessed with records of dirty deals between the British representatives and the feudal rebel leaders that he damns the rebel leadership as a whole. He forgets that the uprising produced some great leaders of whom any nation could be proud and to whom even the British historians have paid homage.

Malleson paid his tribute to Maulavi Ahmadullah of Fyzabad in these words:

"The Maulavi was a very remarkable man... Of his capacity as a military leader many proofs were given during the revolt... No other man could boast that he had twice foiled Sir Colin Campbell in the field! If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongly destroyed, of his native country, then most certainly the Maulavi was a true patriot. He had not stained his sword by assassination; he had connived at no murders; he had fought man-

fully, honourably and stubbornly in the field against the strangers who had seized his country; and his memory is entitled to the respect of the brave and true-hearted of all nations."[19]

Such glowing tributes from British sources themselves could be multiplied for Rani of Jhansi, Tatya Tope, Kunwar Singh and many local leaders.

Let us, therefore, learn to respect anew our common people and their leaders who did their duty in the anti-British national rising of 1857.

It is inspiring to recall here what Marx thought of the 1857 national uprising. As early as July 31, 1857, on the basis of Indian mail carrying Delhi news up to 17th June, he concluded his unsigned newsletter to the *New York Daily Tribune* with these words, "By and by there will ooze out other facts able to convince even John Bull himself that what he considers military mutiny is in truth a national revolt."[20]

India's historians may go on arguing and differing about the character of the 1857 revolt but the mass of the Indian people have already accepted it as the source-spring of our national movement. The hold of the 1857 heritage on national thought is so great that even Dr R. C. Mazumdar concludes his study with the following words:

"The outbreak of 1857 would surely go down in history as the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India, on an extensive scale. As such it inspired the genuine national movement for the freedom of India from British yoke which started half a century later. The memory of 1857-58 sustained the later movement, infused courage into the hearts of its fighters, furnished a historical basis for the grim struggle, and gave it a moral stimulus, the value of which it is impossible to exaggerate. The memory of the revolt of 1857, distorted but hallowed with sanctity, perhaps did more damage to the cause of the British rule in India than the Revolt itself."[21]

The controversy whether the 1857-58 struggle was a

sepoy revolt or a national uprising can be resolved only by squarely posing and truthfully analysing the character of the contestants on either side and the nature of the issues —political, economic and ideological—involved in this struggle. In short, a sound historical evaluation demands that who was fighting whom and for what be correctly stated. An attempt has been made in this paper to study this controversial problem along the above lines.

II. AGAINST THE FIRINGHI'S RAJ

The story of the East India Company's conquest of India is well known. Marx summarised it in 1853 in the following pregnant words:

"How came it that English supremacy was established in India? The paramount power of the great Moghul was broken by the Moghul Viceroys. The power of the Viceroys was broken by the Marhattas. The power of the Marhattas was broken by the Afghans and while all were struggling against all, the Britisher rushed in and was enabled to subdue them all. A country not only divided between the Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest? If we knew nothing of the past history of Hindusthan, would there not be the one great and incontestable fact, that even at this moment India is held in English thraldom by an Indian army maintained at the cost of India? India, then, could not escape the fact of being conquered."[22]

After the great rebellion had begun, on July 15, 1857, in an unsigned article in the *New York Daily Tribune* he commented: "Great Britain, for about 150 years, contrived to retain the tenure of her Indian Empire. The antagonism of the various races, tribes, castes, creeds, and sovereignties, the aggregate of which forms the geographic unity of what

is called India, continued to be the vital principle of British supremacy. In later times, however, the conditions of that supremacy have undergone a change. With the conquest of Scinde and the Punjab, the Anglo-Indian Empire had not only reached its natural limits but it had trampled up the last vestiges of independent Indian States....

"It no longer attacked one part of India by the help of another but found itself placed at the head, and the whole of India at its feet. No longer conquering, it had become the conqueror." [23]

In another article, Marx characterised the Company's rule in India as "European despotism, planted upon Asiatic despotism." [24]

In another article on the native States, Marx again in pithy and significant words analyses the situation that enabled the British to conquer in India and ultimately provoked the revolt against their rule.

"After the British intruders had once put their feet in India and made up their mind to hold it, there remained no alternative but to break the power of the native princes by force or by intrigue. Placed with regard to them in similar circumstances as the ancient Romans with regard to their allies, they followed in the track of Roman politics. 'It was,' says an English writer, 'a system of fattening allies as we fatten oxen till they were worthy of being devoured.' After having won over allies in the way of ancient Rome, the East India Company executed them in the modern manner of *Change-Alley.*

"In order to discharge the engagements they had entered into with the Company, the native princes were forced to borrow enormous sums from the Englishmen at a usurious interest. When the embarrassment had reached the highest pitch, the creditors got inexorable, 'the screw was turned' and the princes were compelled either to concede their territories amicably to the Company or to begin war: to become pensioners of their usurpers in one case, or to be deposed as traitors in the other. At this moment, the Indian

States occupied an area of 699,961 square miles—with a population of 52,941,263 souls, being, however, no longer allies but only the dependants of the British Government upon multifarious conditions and under the various forms of the subsidiary and of the protective systems. These systems have in common the relinquishment by the Indian States of the right of self-defence, of maintaining diplomatic relations and of settling disputes among themselves without the interference of the Governor-General.

"The conditions under which they are allowed to retain their apparent independence are, at the same time, the conditions of a permanent decay and of an utter inability of improvement. Organic weakness is the constitutional law of their existence, as of all existence living upon sufferance." [25]

It is a very truthful characterisation of the evils that followed from the system of subsidiary alliances, etc. Looking back, the remarkable fact stands out that the conclusions to which Indian national scholarship reached in the first two or three decades of the present century, Marx had already formulated in their broad but significant outlines while these great historical events were actually taking place.

The more farsighted of the contemporary British writers also had some glimmerings of what Marx had so trenchantly analysed. For example, William Howitt wrote: "The system which for more than a century was steadily at work to strip Indian princes of their dominions, and that too, under the most sacred pleas of right and expediency, is the system of torture more exquisite or regal than spiritual tyranny ever before discovered such as the world has nothing similar to show." [26]

Again, to quote Grant Duff, "the planting of British residents in their capitals was the cause of their ruin; for one of the duties of these officers was to foment dissensions." [27]

With Dalhousie's regime, a new aggressive policy of

unprincipled annexations and slashing the pensions of the tallest deposed princes began and created consternation all over Hindustan. The facts are well known. The case of the annexation of Oudh is typical and highlights the commotion created all over the country by the British policy of unsatiated aggression and unprincipled annexations.

On the nature and consequences of the policy of annexation let us take Oudh as a typical case. Malleson, the orthodox British historian of the Indian revolt stated "Whatever may be the justification offered for the annexation of Oudh, it cannot be questioned that, having regard to the manner in which that policy was carried out, it not only failed to conciliate—it even tended to alienate from the British every class in India..."[28].

Gubbins, who was then Revenue Commissioner at Lucknow, later compiled a report of the national rebellion in this region and recorded statements of Indians in touch with him. In one of these statements, it was stated: "The people of Hindustan likewise said, 'the country of Oudh belongs to the King and whether he has done well or ill as regards his own Government, he has not injured or broken faith with the English in any way; if the British Government dethrones the King who has ever been so faithful to him, what independent Nawab or Rajah is safe.'"[29]

The more farsighted Anglo-Indian statesmen clearly visualised the revolutionary consequences of this aggressive and all-destructive British policy. For example, Sir John Malcolm had forewarned much earlier: "The inherited rights of chiefs and the cherished allegiance of their followers are all swept away and the ties and feelings which originally constituted the strongest links of social order and peace being outraged and broken are converted into an element of discontent and rebellion."[30]

The Company's rule was not only one of political aggression but of rampant racialism which every Indian was made to feel and suffer. It was a feature of the Company's regime ever since its beginning and produced its inevitable

consequences. Shore who wrote at the very beginning of the establishment of the Company's power in India stated that the Indians were considered no better than "nasty heathen wretches."[31] In 1780, the author of *Seir Mutaqherin* recorded with bitterness that "the English seldom visit or see any of us."[32] The French translator of the *Seir* wrote: "The general turn of the English individuals in India seems to be thorough contempt for the Indians (as a national body). It is taken to be no better than a dead stock, that may be worked upon without much consideration, and at pleasure."[33]

The Indians suffered all the indignities and humiliations that follow from such a racialist attitude and ultimately began their struggle against the alien regime based on racialism The London *Times* sent Russell as their correspondent to cover the revolt. On his way to Banaras, he found "in no instance is a friendly glance directed to the white man's carriage." "Oh! that language of the eye! Who can doubt? Who can misinterpret it? It is by it alone that I have learnt our race is not even feared at times by many and that by all it is disliked."[34]

Another direct consequence of the despotic racialist British regime was to exclude the natives of India from all higher appointments which involved trust and responsibility.

Pleading for the employment of Indians in the administration, Sir Thomas Munro wrote in 1818: "Foreign conquerors had treated the natives with violence, and often with great cruelty. But none has treated them with so much scorn as we; none have stigmatised the whole people as unworthy of trust, as incapable of honesty, and as fit to be employed only where we cannot do without them. It seems to me not only ungenerous, but impolitic, to debase the character of a people fallen under our domination."[35]

In a Minute by a Member of the Bombay Council, the swamp of frustration and unrest is even more seriously stated: "Numerous native officers of distinction who have been thrown out of employ by the overthrow of ancient

order, contend, by their intrigues and complaints, to keep up the spirit of discontent in greater vigour and to disseminate it more widely."[36]

The danger of this situation was clearly foreseen by the wiser elements among the British ruling class. As an example, we give the following questions and answers before the Parliamentary Committee in 1832:

"*Question* 138, *Chairman*: But you think there is a constant indefinite danger belonging to our position in India?

"*Henry Russell*: The magazine is charged, though at present there is no spark likely to be applied to it... (Q. 140). The great mischief of our internal government in India has been the abolition of the respectable class of natives. It has occasioned the utter extinction of that class. (Q. 143) At present they cannot but be dissatisfied with it, not as a foreign government only but as a government in which they have *no stake*, and which held out to them no objects of hopes or expectations."[37]

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan served the British during the revolt and after its suppression wrote his famous book, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, where he stated "Another reason for the dissatisfaction of the natives of India, and more especially of the Mohammedans was the exclusion of natives from high appointments. A few short years ago, Mohammedans filled the most honourable posts under their own government and the desire and hope for such is still in them. Under the English Government they longed for the advancement of their honour in the eyes of the world, but there was no way open to them. In the early days of this Government, natives of rank were certainly singled out to fill high posts but by degrees this fell into disuse."[38]

Thus the systematic exclusion of the Indians from official employment of a superior character was an anti-Indian policy and the justified discontent of the Indian upper classes against it was a *national* factor of great importance among the causes that led the Indian people to revolt against their rule

On top of this as far as the mass of the Indian people were concerned they found the British administrative system was corrupt as it was alien.

Prichard complains of "the corruption and venality of our law courts." And he was not alone in his criticism. Moreover, the complexity of the English legal procedure was beyond the intelligence of an ignorant cultivator. He could not employ a lawyer to present his case. According to the old tradition, "a court was open to all and the poorest peasant could present his suit there without let or hindrance..." The courts of law became in the hands of the rich and the crafty an instrument of unjust oppression, and false witnesses could be purchased and false documents could be fabricated to establish a false claim. Raikes, a judge of the Sadr Court at Agra says: "They (the people of North West Province) dislike, for very sufficient reason our system of civil procedure."[39] The British rulers eliminated local representative organs like the panchayats from all functions in the administration. They were the traditional administrative organs for maintaining the peace and defending their rights and fulfilling their duties towards the state. The British imposed a separate mercenary police system.

It was against this system that the Indian people in 1857 showed their hatred by destroying the *thana*, *kutcheri*, treasury, etc., whenever they could get the chance.

This hatred is only too understandable if it is remembered that the English system was alien to Indian tradition, injurious to Indian interests, and regarded with hostility by the Indians themselves. This was known to the contemporary British officials and the more serious among them were alarmed by the phenomena and took up the problem inside and outside the British Parliament. Russell was very frank when he stated: "It is a system too essentially English; it has little or nothing Indian in it, and does not accord either with the original constitutions of the country, or with the habits and opinions of its inhabitants.... The people of India have no confidence in our system.... Our Govern-

ment have no sympathy with their opinions....The subjects of other States who possess none of these advantages.... would still look upon a transfer to our rule as the greatest calamity that could befall them."[40] Sir John Malcolm had come to the conclusion that all the elements of the country saw nothing, "but a system which doomed them to immediate decline and ultimate annihilation."[41] Much earlier Shore had characterised the situation in these significant words. "Our Empire is, indeed, like an island of sand thrown up by an inundation.... No embankments have been raised, no trees planted, whose roots might extend beneath and bind together."[42] During the steam-rollering regime of Dalhousie, Colonel Lowe recorded in his Minutes: "In all respects, the natives of India are exactly like inhabitants of all parts of the known world; they like their own habits and customs better than those of the foreigners."[43]

It was a stroke of instinctive genius on the part of the insurgent sepoys of Meerut when they crossed the Jamuna and liberated from British yoke the traditional capital city of our ancient country and crowned the disinherited heir of Akbar, Bahadur Shah, *Shahenshah* of Hindustan.

The revolutionary significance of this event was universally accepted and has been characterised by Charles Ball in the following words: "The Meerut Sepoys in a moment found a leader, a flag and a cause. The mutiny was transformed into a revolutionary war."[44]

Bahadur Shah was a dull, decrepit old man, but this did not mean much in the historical struggle that was then being unfolded. As the rightful scion of a long uninterrupted line of the reigning sovereigns of India, the great Moghul dynasty of Delhi, he occupied a strategic place in the political set up of India as the traditional sovereign of Hindustan. The British recognised and exploited the situation ever since Lord Lake crossed the Jamuna on September 15, 1803, and British troops entered the City of Delhi for the first time and it was decided to retain the Moghul Badshah as he was.

Metcalfe, the British chief in Delhi, states: "It was deemed a better policy to tolerate a double executive authority in the City, to retain the shadow of the Moghul dynasty, lest the king's deposition should alarm the whole Mohammedan race in India. Yet, it was patent to the dullest apprehension that, although the new power which powers Delhi might for the time being, in the estimation of the natives, be the virtual ruler of Hindustan, will, so long the shadow of the old dynasty remained, it would be regarded as the one and only foundation of honour, the one authority to be reverenced. Princes still bore the title conferred by the King, the current coin of every kind continued to be struck in the name of the existing monarch; application for confirmation of the successors to the chieftainship of petty states, still were made to him and when from time to time these applications were refused, appeals were lodged with the Resident to use his influence with the Moghul to grant the prayers of his petitioners. When serious riots occurred, as they subsequently did, the people looked to the King for protection from the British authorities. .

"After each humiliation, the Sovereign continued and gradually regained his ascendancy. Therefore, while the natives accepted the position of a humiliated monarch for their emperor, there was always the possibility of his once again regaining power and they were content to wait. But when it was known that the British intented to close the succession and disperse their families, the deepest feelings of both Hindus and Mohammedans were roused. . .

"The English were living over a volcano ready to burst into deadly violence at any moment." [5]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Moghul dynasty was yet the symbol of Indian sovereignty. The British usurpers had preserved the Moghul, as the titular head of India, as a cover for their own rule. The insurgent sepoys made the British system of exploitation and retention of the Moghul Badshahi boomerang on them. The first thing they did was to deprive the British of this traditional

symbol and used it themselves to advance the cause of the anti-British war by declaring him as the crowned head of an independent India.

Liberated Delhi with the traditional Moghul Badshah at the head became the symbol of an independent national state though some eminent Indian historians do not recognise this. The British rulers recognised this very phenomenon as the most dangerous element in the situation.

This new development in the age-old capital of India was behind Canning's pressing orders, to the whole succession of British commanders-in-chief, to finalise the assault on insurgent Delhi as soon as possible. This fact was behind Lawrence denuding Punjab of all troops and best commanders and officials for the conquest of Delhi. This was behind Elgin's agreeing to let Canning have all the British troops meant for Britain's war against the Taipings, and himself coming down to Calcutta, to inspire greater confidence in the British army and the official world.

A similar liberated regional state centre had also been established at Lucknow and, therefore, these two places became the most strategic places, both in the plan of the revolutionaries and also of the British imperialists. Metcalfe states: "Each corner of India where the soldiery mutinied had a special history of its own, but around Delhi and Lucknow, the greatest interest was centred. Upon one of these two centres in North India, the rebel soldiery gradually converged, as regiment after regiment mutinied, and it was at Delhi that the question of English supremacy was virtually decided."[46]

The well-known writer of the Red Pamphlet writes that "All Oudh has been in arms against us. Not only the regular troops but 60 thousand men of the army of the ex-king, the zamindars and their retainers, the 250 forts—most of them heavily armed with guns—had been working against us. They have balanced the rule of the Company with the Sovereignty of their own kings and have pronounced, almost unanimously, in favour of the latter. The very pen-

sioners who have served in the army have declared against us and to a man joined in the insurrection."[47]

Thus what the British were faced with in Oudh was not only an armed organised popular rebellion but a regional state based on the restoration of the traditional dynasty which the people headed by the armed sepoys had consciously set up against the foreign Company's unjust rule.

It was the expression of *national* feeling that made our ancestors hate the Firinghi rule as an alien, evil system. It was the expression of *national* will to be free and independent when they risked their lives fighting the "Firinghi devil" in the revolutionary struggle of 1857-58. It was the expression of the popular desire to establish national sovereignty when they sought to restore the dethroned emperors and kings to their old places.

It was a limitation of the then existing national consciousness that our rebel ancestors looked back and restored the Moghul Badshah, the Maratha Peshwa, and the Oudh Nawab as their state chiefs but it would be utterly wrong to consider that they were backward or reactionary. In the then existing situation the broadest national unity against British domination could only be forged by allying with the disinherited Badshahs, Peshwas and Nawabs. We will show in another section how the resurgent Indian people were not restoring pre-British feudal autocracy in India but putting a new popular democratic stamp upon the revolutionary regimes set up under Bahadur Shah or Nana or the Oudh Nawab. It was very healthy national feeling to prefer our own rulers to the foreign rulers and have the strength and confidence to deal with the failings and limitations of our rulers in our own way and according to our own strength. This is exactly what the Indian revolutionary leaders of 1857 did. Of course, they did not have, as they could not have, the conceptions and the ideas which the Indian national liberation movement or the other colonial movements imbibed during the twentieth century, but to judge the 1857 national uprising in terms of the modern

national emancipatory movements is unhistorical in approach and unscientific on any account.

In Lucknow, in a proclamation issued by Birjs Qadr, Wali of Lucknow, it was stated "All the Hindus and Mohammedans are aware that four things are dear to every man First, Religion; Second, Honour; third, Life; fourth, Property. All these four things are safe under a native government."[48]

The above states, in short, what made the insurgent leaders hate the British government and also seek to establish their own government. The central aim of the 1857-58 insurrection was to destroy the British state in India and establish an Indian State in its place, the first was the destructive and the second the constructive part of the struggle. If this does not make this uprising a national revolt, what else will ?

III. AN ECONOMIC ORDER UPROOTED

The British conquest of India implied not only the imposition of alien rule but, something worse still, a pitiless destruction of the traditional Indian social order itself and disruption of its own normal development towards a new order. Marx was the only thinker of the period who studied this tragic phenomenon scientifically and formulated the role of British imperialism in India in such a correct manner that his conclusions were borne out by the subsequent researches of Indian scholarship and they helped Indian patriots to understand Indian reality better and give a progressive orientation to Indian national thought.

As early as 1853 when the Indian situation was being debated in the British Parliament on the occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, Marx stated in an article entitled "British Rule in India":

"All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindostan may appear, did not go

deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindu, and separates Hindostan ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history.... It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel... British steam and science uprooted over the whole surface of Hindustan, the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry."[49]

In another of his works, Marx projected the problem on a broader plane: "The obstacles presented by the internal solidity and articulation of pre-capitalistic, national, modes of production to the corrosive influence of commerce is strikingly shown in the intercourse of the English with India and China. The broad basis of the mode of production is here formed by the unity of small agriculture and domestic industry, to which is added in India the form of communes resting upon common ownership of land which, by the way, was likewise the original form in China. In India, the English exerted simultaneously their direct political and economic power as rulers and landlords for the purpose of disrupting these small economic organisations. The English commerce exerts a revolutionary influence on these organisations and tears them apart only to the extent that it destroys by the low price of its goods, their spinning and weaving industries which are an archaic and integral part of this unity."[50]

The most important aspect of this break up of the old economic order concerned agrarian relations. It is significant that a very farsighted Anglo-Indian statesman, Sir Thomas Munro, had the prescience to observe: "In India, whoever regulates the assessment of the land really holds in his hand the mainspring of the peace of the country."[51] The havoc done to our land system by the British rulers can best be described in the inimitable words of Karl Marx:

"If any nation's history, then it is the history of the English management of India which is a string of unsuccessful and really absurd (and in practice, infamous) experiments in economics. In Bengal, they created a caricature of English-landed property on a large scale; in the south-east India a caricature of small allotment of property, in the north-west, they transformed to the utmost of their ability the Indian commune with common ownership of the soil into a caricature of itself."[32]

The British reforms meant destroying the whole traditional basis of Indian agriculture based on the village community system, which Marx has characterised as "a social system of particular features—the so-called village system, which gave to each of these small unions their independent organisation and distinct life." The other innovation introduced by the British was to make land into private property. The two together meant ruination of Indian agriculture and mass dispossession of the agriculturists.

The great difference that the British land policy implied and its devastating consequences were admitted by the ideological propagandists of British imperialism. For example, Sir John Strachey in his book, *India, Its Administration and Progress*, which has served as a textbook for a whole generation, has stated: " ...Our policy has been to encourage the growth of private property in land . ..Former Governments hardly recognised the existence of such property."[33]

"It can hardly be doubted that their indebtedness is greater now than it was before the establishment of our Government because the right of private property in land has been virtually almost created by ourselves. When there was practically no such right, there was comparatively speaking, no credit; there was no adequate security that a landlord desirous of borrowing could offer, and there was, therefore, less indebtedness."[34]

"If he [landlord] does not pay at the district treasury

on the appointed date, no questions are asked.... The estate is put to public auction."[55]

It is very useful today to look back at the agrarian system introduced by the British and the mass discontent it generated, through the eyes of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, whom the British regarded as a very wise and competent administrator and who had a whole life's first-hand experience of the land system. Let me quote from his *Causes of the Indian Revolt.*

"Under former rulers, in old times, the system of buying and selling rights in landed property, or mortgage, and of transfer by gift, undoubtedly prevailed. But there was little of it, and what little there was, was due to the consent and wishes of the parties concerned....

"In the first days of British rule, sales of landed property were so numerous that the whole country was turned upside down....

"So too the practice of sale in satisfaction of debt has been most objectionable. Bankers and moneylenders have availed themselves of it to advance money to landlords, resorting to every kind of trickery and roguery, to rob them of their property. They have instituted suits without end in the civil courts, some fraudulent, some correct enough. The consequence has been that they have very generally ousted the old landlords and insinuated themselves into their properties. Troubles of this kind have ruined landlords throughout the length and breadth of the land....

"The system of revenue settlement introduced by the English Government does it the greatest credit. But, it is heavy compared with former settlements. Formarly the revenue was realised by sharing the actual crop with the cultivator.... The assessments imposed by the English Government have been fixed without any regard to various contingencies."[56]

It is necessary to understand that these agrarian

changes alienated literally all classes and sections in the countryside. Dr. Sen rightly states:

"But the zamindars and taluqdars were not the only persons to lose their ancestral occupations. The new law of sale caused equal hardship to the peasant as well. He was in chronic debt and the bania who was a village money-lender was not an honest creditor. He practised usury as a rule and did not always shrink from fraud. Under the protection of their feudal lords the illiterate debtors were previously safe. But the new law permitted sale of land for unpaid debts and with land, the peasant also lost his occupation. The dispossessed peasant and the dispossessed landlord were united not only by the bond of common adversity but also by feudal ties of protection and loyalty. The zamindar lived in his village and, although the peasant often suffered at his hands, he could nonetheless count upon his master's support and sympathy in times of difficulty. The bania, however, was an outsider. He purchased the proprietory rights and the peasants' holding for the sake of the financial gains likely to accrue. Between him and the peasant, therefore, no sentimental tie of affection or loyalty was ordinarily possible. And the peasant still felt bound to stand by his former feudal chief."[67]

The situation in Central India was equally devastating. Dr. Lowe who served with Sir Hugh Rose in Central India, states: "Confiscation after confiscation had been made which appear to have thoroughly aroused their long dormant passions to a pitch hard to be restrained." Quoting an old villager he adds: "The jungles, Saheb, the trees, the rivers, the wells, all the villages and all the holy cities belong to the *sircar*. They have taken all—everything. Very good, what can we do?"[68]

In the above background, the significance of the appeal of the rebel proclamation issued by Bahadur Shah stands out:

"It is evident that the British Government in making zamindary settlements had imposed exorbitant *jummas*,

and have disgraced and ruined several zamindars by putting up their estates to public auction for arrears of rent....

"In litigations regarding zamindaries, the immense value of stamps and other unnecessary expenses of the civil courts which are pregnant with all sorts of crooked dealings and the practice of allowing a case to hang on for years are all calculated to impoverish the litigants.

"Besides this the coffers of the zamindars are annually taxed with subscriptions for schools, hospitals and roads, etc. Such extortions will have no manner of existence in the *Badshahi* Government. But, on the contrary, the *jummas* will be light, the dignity and honour of the zamindars safe and every zamindar will have absolute rule in his zamindari. The zamindari disputes will be summarily decided according to the *shurrah* and the *shastras* without any expense; and zamindars who resist in the present war with their men and money shall be excused for ever from paying half the revenue. Zamindars aiding only with money shall be exempted in perpetuity from paying one-fourth of the revenue and should any zamindar who has been unjustly deprived of his lands during the English Government, personally join the war, he will be restored to the zamindari and excused for paying only one-fourth of the revenue."[50]

In Bahadur Shah's Manifesto only the zamindars are mentioned but not the peasants. The omission is noteworthy. As it will be explained in a later section, the peasant interests were voiced through the Court which thought along the lines of changing the land system itself and land to the tiller.

India after the 18th century was both a manufacturing as well as prosperous agricultural country and the fine products of the Indian looms as well as other wares of Indian manufacture were famous throughout the world and supplied the markets of Asia and Europe. The British destroyed the existing Indian industry and trade and gave them an entirely different direction Dr. D. R. Gadgil states : "The decline which, though in some cases had begun

as early as the end of the 18th century became very marked about the middle of the 19th century...."[90]

"The process of decay, begun by the establishment of foreign rule (due to the cessation of the chief source of demand of the native Indian courts) and helped on by the force of foreign influence, was completed by the competition of foreign goods....

"The decay of the urban industry certainly heightened the pressure on land, not so much by an active migration from the cities (not that this was entirely absent), but by retaining the people on land, who would otherwise, have been in due course absorbed into the urban industries."[91]

After the conquest of Bengal and eventually throughout India, the method of enforced and unequal trade was used to loot India and this led to its economic ruination. R.P. Dutt states how the situation underwent a qualitative change after the British became the ruling class in India, how "methods of power could be increasingly used to weight the balance of exchange and secure the maximum goods for the minimum payment."[92]

By the end of 18th century and much more clearly by 1813-33, a shift had come over British policy towards India. After a period of primitive plunder and the systematic ruination of Indian trades and crafts, the British bourgeoisie with the completion of their Industrial Revolution, began to use India as a dumping ground for its industrial manufactures and above all textiles. Marx noted this sharp shift, and in one of his articles during 1853, wrote,

"The whole character of trade was changed. Till 1813 India had been chiefly an exporting country while it now became an importing one; and in such quick progression, that already in 1823 the rate of exchange which had generally been 2/6 per rupee sunk down to 2/- per rupee. India, the great workshop of cotton manufacture for the world, since immemorial times became now inundated with English twists and cotton stuffs. After its own produce had

been excluded from England, or only accepted on the most cruel terms, British manufactures were poured into it at a small or merely nominal duty, to the ruin of native cotton fabric once so celebrated."[63]

The policy of the East India Company also annihilated the independent merchant bourgeoisie as well as the artisans and craftsmen. Prof. Ramkrishna Mukherjee describes the process in the following words:

"Along with thus turning the Indian artisans 'out of this 'temporal' world' as Marx remarked caustically, proceeded the liquidation of the Indian merchant bourgeoisie. Monopolising Indian products for the English meant that the Indian merchants could no longer survive. Only those could maintain their profession who acquiesced in becoming underlings of the Company or of its servants engaged in private inland trade in India or of the private English merchants residing in India for the same purpose. Otherwise, they had to find a new source of livelihood. Not only were the Indian merchants prohibited from buying commodities directly from the producers which were monopolised by the English, but the agents of the Company and its servants forced such goods on the Indian merchants at a price higher than the prevailing one."[64]

By annihilating the independent merchant bourgeoisie, which to some extent also fulfilled the role of the manufacturing bourgeoisie, the monopolist East India Company destroyed that very important class in Indian economy which could be their rival.

Another aspect of this phenomenon is noted and analysed by K. M. Panikkar in the following words: "With the establishment of European trade centres in the main coastal areas of India, there had developed a powerful Indian capitalist class, closely associated with the foreign merchants, and deriving great profits from trade with them.... The Marwari millionaires of Bengal have become the equivalent of the compradore classes of Shanghai of a later period .... The emergence of this powerful class, whose economic

interests were bound up with those of the foreign merchants and who had an inherited hatred of Muslim rule, was a factor of fundamental importance to the history of India and of Asia."[86] These Indian agents of the Company and of the British merchants were called gomasthas and bannias and played the role of sub-agents of foreign capital and a pro-British role in the 1857 uprising.

How did intelligent Indians react to the above economic situation and policies?

It is useful to quote Allamah Fazle Haq of Khayrabad, an eminent Muslim scholar of the traditional school who took a leading part in the 1857 revolt and was transported for life:

"Having seized power they (the British) decided to bring under their hold the various sections of the people by controlling eatables, by taking possession of the ears of corn and grain and giving the peasants and cultivators cash in lieu of their rights of farming. Their object was not to allow the poor men and villagers a free hand in buying and selling grains. By giving preference to their own people, they wanted to control the cheapening or raising of the rates so that the people of God might submit to their (Christian) policy of monopoly, and their dependence on them (Christians) for their requirements might force them to meet the purpose of the Christians and their supporters, and their desire and ambitions which they had in their hearts and the mischiefs and evils which they had concealed in their minds."[80]

In the above background, the appeal of the manifesto issued by Bahadur Shah on behalf of the insurgent centre at Delhi had its own significance. The manifesto appealed in the following words to the merchants:

"It is plain that the infidel and treacherous British Government have monopolised the trade of all the fine and valuable merchandise such as indigo, cloth and other articles of shipping, leaving only the trade of trifles to the people and even in this they are not allowed their shares of the

profits, which they secure by means of customs and stamp fees, etc., in money suits, so that the people have merely a trade in name. Besides this, the profit of the traders are taxed with postages, tolls, and subscriptions for schools, etc. Notwithstanding all these concessions, the merchants are liable to imprisonment and disgrace at the instance or complaint of a worthless man.

"When the Badshahi Government is established all these aforesaid fraudulent practices shall be dispensed with, and the trade of every article, without exception, both by land and water shall be opened to the native merchants of India who will have the benefit of the Government steam vessels and steam carriages for the conveyance of their merchandise gratis and merchants having no capital of their own shall be assisted from the public treasury. It is, therefore, the duty of every merchant to take part in the war, and aid the Badshahi Government with its men and money, either secretly or openly as may be consistent with its position or interest, and forswear its allegiance to the British Government."[14]

The manifesto appealed to the artisans in the following words:

"It is evident that the Europeans by the introduction of English articles into India have thrown the weavers, the cotton dressers, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the shoe-makers, etc. out of employ and have engrossed their occupations so that every description of native artisan had been reduced to beggary. But under the Badshahi Government, the native artisans will exclusively be employed in the services of the kings, the rajahs and the rich and this will no doubt ensure their prosperity. Therefore these artisans ought to renounce the English services and assist the *Mujahids* or religious fighters engaged in the war and thus be entitled both to secular and eternal happiness."[15]

The economic and political operation of the East India Company in India led to a systematic squeezing of our national wealth which has been described by India's

economic historians as the economic drain. Let us examine this as it existed on the eve of 1857 revolt.

There was the so-called Indian Debt, "which was incurred by the Company in order to consolidate its position in India and to spread its influence further through expeditions and wars and at the same time, paying high dividends to share holders in England, tributes to the British Government since 1769 and bribes to the influential persons in England."[4] R C Dutt, makes the following comments as regards the genesis and mechanism of this Indian Debt: "A very popular error prevails in this country (England in 1903) that the whole Indian Debt represents British capital sunk in the development of India. It is shown in the body of this volume that this is not the genesis of the Public Debt of India When the East India Company ceased to be the rulers of India in 1858 they had piled up an Indian Debt of 70 millions. They had in the meantime drawn a tribute from India, financially an unjust tribute, exceeding 150 million, not calculating interest. They had also charged India with the cost of Afghan wars, Chinese wars and other wars outside India Equitably, therefore, India owed nothing at the close of the Company's rule; her Public Debt was a myth; there was a considerable balance of over 100 millions in her favour out of the money that had been drawn from her."[6]

Montgomery Martin. an Englishman with sympathy for the Indian people, wrote as early as 1838: "This annual drain of £3,000,000 on British India amounted in 30 years at 12 per cent (the usual Indian rate) compound interest to the enormous sum of £723,997,917 sterling, or, at a low rate, as £2,000,000 for 50 years, to £8,400,000,000 sterling' So constant and accumulating a drain even on England would have soon impoverished her; how severe then must be its effect on India, where the wages of a labourer is from 2 d. to 3 d. a day ?"[7]

Then again. "For half a century we have gone on draining from 2 to 3 and sometimes 4 million pounds sterling a

year from India, which has been remitted to Great Britain to meet the deficiencies of commercial speculations, to pay the interests of debts, to support the home establishment, and to invest on England's soil the accumulated wealth of those whose lives have been spent in Hindustan. I do not think it possible for human ingenuity to avert entirely the evil effects of a continued drain of 3 to 4 million pounds a year from a distant country like India, and which is never returned to it in any shape."[72]

Prof. Ramkrishna Mukherjee goes even further and states: "A total picture of this tribute from India is seen to be even greater than the figure mentioned by Martin in 1838. During the 24 years of the last phase of the Company's rule, from 1834-35 to 1857-58, even though the years 1855, '56 and '57 showed a total import-surplus of £6,436,345 —(not because the foreign rulers had changed their policy, but because some British capital flowed into India to build railway in order to prepare her for exploitation by British industrial capital),—the total tribute which was drained from India in the form of 'home charges' and 'excess of Indian exports' amounted to the colossal figure of £151,830,989. This works out at a yearly average of £6,325,875, or roughly half the annual land revenue collections in this period!"[73]

The above was the grim reality, grimmer than any ever witnessed in the whole course of India's age-old historic development. As Marx stated, "there cannot, however, remain any doubt but that the misery inflicted by the British on Hindustan is of essentially different and infinitely more intensive kind than Hindustan had to suffer before."[74]

The British, under the East India Company's rule disrupted the whole economic order of India, they turned the traditional land system topsy turvy, they smashed the trades and manufactures of the land and disrupted the relationship between these two sectors of the Indian economy, systematically drained the wealth of our country to their own, and destroyed the very springs of production of our economy. Every class of Indian society suffered at this new

spoliator's hands. The landlords were dispossessed and the peasants rendered paupers, the merchant bourgeoisie of India liquidated as an independent class and the artisans and craftsmen deprived of their productive professions. Such unprecedented destruction of a whole economic order and of every class within it could not but produce a great social upheaval and that was the national uprising of 1857. The all-destructive British policy produced a broad popular rebellion against its rule.

Within Indian society, however, those productive forces and classes had not yet grown (in fact early British policy had itself destroyed their first off-shoots) that could lead this revolution to victory. The revolt of 1857 as also its failure were both historical inevitabilities. But it also was a historical necessity, for after it followed those modern developments (which we will later analyse), from which emerged the modern national liberation movement of the Indian people and those new social forces which led it to victory.

III. THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

The religious factor played a big part in the revolt of 1857. The British statesmen and chroniclers exaggerated and deliberately misinterpreted the role played by this factor to prove their thesis that the 1857 uprising was reactionary, revivalist and directed against the progressive reforms that they were introducing in Indian society. The early generation of English-educated Indian intellectuals swallowed this imperialist thesis uncritically because they themselves had suffered under the old reactionary religious influences. A true historical outlook demands that we do not forget the historical stage which Indian society had reached on the eve of 1857, the ideological values which would be normal to this society and the ideological forms in which the Indian people could formulate their aspirations.

Indian feudal society in the middle of the 19th century

was rapidly disintegrating and alien conquerors were seeking to exploit our weaknesses to their own advantage. They were conducting a furious, well planned, economic, political and ideological offensive against our country. The biggest problem facing all classes of the Indian people was to save India for the Indians and defend it from the Firinghis' all-sided onslaughts. In the then historical context, traditional religious-cultural concepts could not but be a very important constituent of the Indian ideological struggle against the foreigner's rule. From his own study of history and people's age-old struggles to remake their destiny Marx had come to the conclusion:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionsing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language."[73]

It is not at all true that the British rulers were responsible for the major reforms then introduced, for example, the abolition of *sati*, widow remarriage, etc For purely political propaganda purposes, the British chroniclers subsequently made this claim. The truth is that the initiative, the popular campaign, etc, for these long-needed reforms came from the Indian reformers themselves

By the beginning of the 19th century British rulers had become so arrogant and power drunk that in administrative methods they wilfully ignored and trampled under foot Indian customs and the mass of Indians concluded that all this was designed with a view to gradually convert them to Christianity. For example, common messing was intro-

duced in jails. Much more serious was the Act 21 of 1850 which enabled converts to inherit their ancestral property. The reaction produced by this Act and how it made easier the task of converting Indians to Christianity is described by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the following words:

"The Legislative Council is not free from the charge of having meddled with religious matters. Act 21 of 1850 was without doubt prejudicial to the professors of other creeds. This Act was thought to have been passed with the view of cozening men into Christianity. The Hindu faith, as is known, allows no converts. To the Hindus therefore, this Act brought no benefit. If a man again becomes a convert to Islam, he is forbidden by the laws of his own religion, from inheriting property left to him by men of another creed. No Mohammadan convert, therefore, could profit by this Act. To such men however as became Christians it offered great advantages. Hence this Act was said not only to interfere with people's religion but to hold out strong inducements to conversion."[76]

This interference with traditional forms also invaded the sepoy army. They were banned from using their caste marks, compelled to 'cross the seas' go abroad to fight Britain's wars, and most serious of all was the introduction of the greased cartridges. The British commanders and statesmen indignantly denied that any fat or lard objectionable to the Hindus and Muslims had been used. It was subsequently proved that they told a deliberate lie. The question was investigated at great length and for years. Kaye records his conclusion in the following words. "There is no question that beef fat was used in the composition of the tallows."[77] Lord Roberts states: "The recent researches of Mr Forrest in the records of the Government of India prove that the lubricating mixture used in preparing the cartridges was actually composed of the objectionable ingredients, cows' fat and lard and that incredible disregard of the soldiers' religious prejudices was displayed in the manufacture of these cartridges."[78]

According to Malleson, "the greased cartridge was only an incident. It was merely the match that exploded the mine which was preparing long since." Still more revealing is Charles Ball: "Mr. Disraeli dismissed the greasing of the cartridges with the remark that nobody believed that to have been the real cause of the outbreak. They (the sepoys) have not hesitated to use freely when fighting against us, the cartridges which they declared would if used, have destroyed their caste."[79]

The suspicion that the British government was out to Christianise the Indian people was widespread. Let us quote a contemporary Muslim divine's statement. "They left no stone unturned and tried their utmost to bring to an end, the various religions (excepting Christianity) by inventing devices. They established schools in towns and cities in order to teach books of their language and faith to the children and illiterate adults. They wiped out of existence the centres of knowledge and learning and *madrasahs* and institutions which have been established in earlier days."[80]

The suspicions of the Indians were thoroughly justified. The Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company, Mr. Mangles said in the House of Commons in 1857: "Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England, in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the other. Everyone must exert all his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing in the country the grand work of making India Christian."[81]

All evidence tends to show that there was an alarming increase in Christian missionary activity. With the above guidance from London, the spirit in which British missionaries operated in India is frankly described by Rev. Kennedy: "Whatever misfortunes come on us as long as our empire in India continues, so long let us not forget that our chief work is the propagation of Christianity in the land. Until Hindustan from Cape Comorin to the Hima-

layas embraces the religion of Christ and until it condemns the Hindu and Muslim religions, our efforts must continue persistently."[82]

Rev. Kennedy himself notes the Indian reaction produced by this hostile attitude and the demoralising, denationalising activities to which it led on the part of the white missionaries, though he did not grasp the significance of what he himself heard and wrote: "A Maulavi of my acquaintance living outwardly on terms of intimacy with me, was on his death bed. I was with him at that time and I asked him what was his last wish before he died. He looked very disconsolate and gloomy at this question. On being asked why he looked so gloomy, he said, 'Truly, I assure you, that I repent exceedingly that I did not kill even two Firinghis in my life.' On another occasion, a respectable and learned Hindu said boldly, 'We wish you to be gone and our native rule to be established; that we may continue in the ways of our fathers!'"[83]

The missionary propaganda was not only violently aggressive and widespread but also supported by the government agency. Syed Ahmad Khan states: "In some districts, the missionaries were actually attended by policemen from the station. And then the missionaries did not confine themselves to explain the doctrines of their own books. In violent and unmeasured language, they attacked the followers and the holy places of other creeds; annoying and insulting beyond expression the feelings of those who listen to them. In this way, too, the seeds of discontent were sown deep in the hearts of the people."[84]

Lord Canning's patronage to missionary activities and his large-scale donation to their funds were well known and widely commented upon. The most infamous is the well known story of Mr. Edmund's letter. About this, Syed Ahmad Khan states:

"Whilst all these discontents were at their height, there suddenly appeared in 1855, a letter by Mr. Edmund, which was circulated publicly from Calcutta and a copy of which

was sent to all the principal officials of the Government. It was to the effect that all Hindustan was now under one rule, that the telegraph had so connected all parts of the country that they were as one, that the railroads brought them so near that all towns were as one; the time had clearly come when there should be but one faith; it was right, therefore, that we should all become Christians. It is no metaphor to say that men were blinded with fear at the receipt of this circular. The ground seemed at last to have given way beneath their feet. They cried out that the long expected hour had indeed arrived. The servants of the Government were first to be made Christians and then the mass of the people. This circular, it was said, was written by order of the Government. But the Lt.-Governor of Bengal soon heard of it, issued a proclamation which soothed men's minds and pushed suspicions to sleep for a time. It was, however, but a temporary relief; men still thought that Government had given up its projects only for a while, but that when it found itself a little stronger, it would resume them."

The introduction of English education was also not motivated by the pure desire to introduce European science and enlightenment into India but by its very protagonists themselves, directly related to the aim of converting the newly-educated Indians. For example, Macaulay wrote in a letter to his mother on October 12, 1836: "It is my firm belief that if our plan of education is followed up, there would not be a single idolator in Bengal thirty years hence!"

Dr. R. C. Mazumdar states: "The highest courts in all the three presidencies decreed that young inexperienced Hindu converts, instead of being placed under the guardianship of their parents were to be forcibly made over with their wives to the missionaries against their will. On one occasion, the judge, who delivered such a judgment was torn by the people who surrounded the court and military had to be called in to save the situation. Commenting on

this incident, an Indian wrote a letter to the *Hindoo Patriot* on April 30 1857, that 'one such instance and not ten thousand false rumours circulated by the native press, is sufficient to disaffect the whole nation towards their rulers.' "[81]

It is abundantly clear therefore, that the British rulers purely for their imperialist motives were out for some decades preceding 1857 to culturally denationalise India by the method of mass conversion to Christianity. This was seen as a menacing danger by the mass of Indians, irrespective of their viewpoint whether it was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan or Bahadur Shah, whether it was the enlightened Bengali intellectual in Calcutta or the Nana Saheb at Bithoor, by the mass of sepoys both Hindu and Muslim. Thus when the religious factor played a big role as it did in the struggle of 1857, it was as a part of the national factor. The mass of Indians took up arms to defend their own religions and they were fighting not only in defence of their religion but to defend their way of life and their nationhood. Of course, there were several reactionary features within Indian society but then the only healthy way to change them was through the struggle of the Indian people themselves.

This is not all. Our rebel ancestors used religion to advance the revolutionary struggle. They did not let religion stupefy them. But they used religion to get the strength to fight the Firinghis.

A proclamation was issued at Delhi with royal permission urging upon the Hindus and Muslims to unite in the struggle in the name of their respective religions. "To all Hindus and Mussalmans, citizens and servants of Hindustan, officers of the army now at Delhi and at Meerut send greetings.—It is well known that in these days all the English have entertained these evil designs—first, to destroy the religion of the whole Hindustani army and then to make the people by compulsion Christians. Therefore, we, solely on account of our religion, have combined with the people and have not spared alive one infidel, and have re-established

the Delhi dynasty on these terms. Hundreds of guns and a large amount of treasure have fallen into our hands; therefore, it is fitting that whoever of the soldiers and people dislike turning Christians should unite with one heart, and, acting courageously, not leave the seed of these infidels remaining."[88]

When the struggle in Oudh after the fall of Lucknow was on the downgrade, and insurgents were heroically fighting defensive and mostly losing battles, the captured sepoys used to be asked by the British why they had joined the revolt. Their answer used to be: "The slaughter of the English is required by our religion. The end will be the destruction of the English and all the sepoys—and then, God knows!"[89]

The Rajah of the Gond tribes was living as a pensioner of the British at Nagpur. He had turned a traditional Sanskrit *sthotra* recited in worshipping the *devi* into an anti-British hymn. The London *Times* of October 31, 1857 gives the translation of the prayer:

> Shut the mouth of the slanderers and
> Eat up backbiters, trample down the sinners,
> You, "Satrusamgharika" (name of Devi,
> 'destroyer of enemy')
> Kill the British, exterminate them, Matchundee.
> Let not the enemy escape, not the wives and children
> Of such oh! Samgharika
> Show favour to Shanker; support your slaves;
> Listen to the cry of religion.
> "Mathalka" eat up the unclean,
> Make no delay,
> Now devour them,
> And that quickly,
> Ghor-Mathalka.

During the siege of Delhi, British agents repeatedly tried to transform the joint Hindu-Muslim struggle into a fratricidal Hindu-Muslim civil war. Even as early as May

1857, British agents began inciting the Muslims against the Hindus in the name of *jihad* and the matter was brought before Bahadur Shah. "The king answered that such a *jihad* was quite impossible, and that such an idea an act of extreme folly, for the majority of the *Purbeah* soldiers were Hindus. Moreover, such an act could create internecine war, and the result would be deplorable. It was fitting that sympathy should exist among all classes.... A deputation of Hindu officers arrived to complain of the war against Hindus being preached. The king replied: 'The holy war is against the English; I have forbidden it against the Hindus.' "[90]

Thus did our rebel ancestors use religion to organise and conduct a united revolutionary struggle against foreign domination. In the historic conditions of 1857, the ideological form of the struggle could not but assume religious forms. To expect anything else would be unrealistic and unscientific.

IV. THE IMPERIALIST TERROR

The British text books on Indian history contained only the story of the "atrocities of the mutineers,"—dishonouring of women, killing of children and so on. The reality, however, was the opposite. Again, the early generation of educated Indians like Savarkar and others began exposing from British sources themselves the story of unprecedented British atrocities against the Indian people. During the non-cooperation movement of the twenties, the British terror during 1857 was related to Jallianwallabagh to rouse the people to struggle more valiantly and unitedly than our ancestors had done during 1857 Thereafter came Edward Thompson's *The Other Side of the Medal* which tried to put across the thesis that there were atrocities on both sides which are best forgotten.

The question of questions is: can the two sides be put on the same plane? Can the crimes committed by the

enslavers of the people be equated with some mistakes and excesses committed by the fighters for freedom? The two cases are different.

The British press was full of the story of Indian barbarities and atrocities as a part of the campaign to get more and more British troops in India and prevent all sober discussion of the causes of the revolt and seek a just solution of the Indian problem. In that insane atmosphere, Marx put the problem in its correct historical perspective:

"There is something in human history like retribution, and it is a rule of historical retribution that its instrument be forged not by the offended but by the offender himself. The first blow dealt to the French monarchy proceeded from the nobility, not from the peasants. The Indian revolt does not commence with the ryots tortured and stripped naked by the British but with the sepoys clad, fed, patted, fatted and pampered by them.

"However infamous the conduct of the sepoy, it is only the reflection, in a concentrated form, of England's own conduct in India, not only during the epoch of the foundation of the Eastern Empire, but even during the last 10 years of a long settled rule....

"As Delhi has not, like the walls of Jericho, fallen before the great puffs of wind, John Bull is to be steeped in cries for revenge up to his very ears, to make him forget that his government is responsible for the mischief hatched and the colossal dimensions it has been allowed to assume."[91]

In early sections of this paper, some idea has been conveyed of the intense anti-British hatred generated among Indians by British misdeeds during hundred years of their rule. That hatred burst forth during the 1857 struggle. A story recorded by Mrs. Coopland describes in Indian village idiom the spirit that animated the rebel sepoys. "An officer, when trying prisoners, asked a sepoy why they killed women and children. The man replied 'when you kill a snake, you kill its young.'"[92]

The leadership of the insurgents, however, did not approve of any inhuman behaviour towards women and children and on the whole succeeded.

Allamah Fazle Haq of Khayrabad in his *Raisalah* on the war states "amongst these (rebel sepoys) were those who did evil things and went beyond limits and committed excesses and cruelties. The children and women were also killed. They earned degradation and disgrace by murdering women and disrepute and dishonour by killing children."[93]

The revolt was the most widespread and reached its highest peak in Oudh and the British historian Forrest pays the following tribute to the humanism and self-discipline of its people: "The troops mutinied and the people threw off their allegiance, but there was no revenge and no cruelty. The brave and turbulent population, with a few exceptions, treated the fugitives of the ruling race with marked kindness and the high courtesy and chivalry of the Barons of Oudh was conspicuous in their dealings with their fallen masters."[94]

The story about dishonouring of the British women kept imprisoned by Nana Saheb in Kanpur is well known. The official historians of 1857, Kaye and Malleson, have themselves exposed it: "The refinements of cruelty—the unutterable shame—with which, in some chronicles of the day, the serious massacre was attended, were but fictions of an excited imagination, too readily believed without enquiry and circulated without thought. None was mutilated none was dishonoured.... This is stated in the most unqualified manner, by the official functionaries who made the most diligent enquiries into all the circumstances of the massacres in June and July."[95]

There were also false stories spread about Delhi that English women were made to walk about naked in the streets, that they were outraged openly, that their breasts were cut, that even small girls were not spared and so on. The white Christian padris were the loudest propagandists

of these tales. Sir William Muir, head of the Intelligence Department, has, however, put on record, "however much of cruelty and bloodshed there was, the tales which gained currency of dishonour to ladies were, so far as my observations and enquiries went, devoid of any satisfactory proof."[96]

If tales of Indian "terror" are largely mythical, British brutality got even Lord Canning worried. On December 24, 1857, the following Minute appears in the proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council: ".. the indiscriminate hanging, not only of persons of all shades of guilt, but of those whose guilt was at the least very doubtful, and the general burning and plunder of villages, whereby the innocent as well as the guilty, without regard to age or sex, were indiscriminately punished, and in some cases, sacrificed, had deeply exasperated large communities not otherwise hostile to the government; that the cessation of agriculture and consequent famine were impending; . . .And lastly, that the proceedings of the officers of the Government had given colour to the rumour. . . that the Government meditated a general bloody persecution of Mohammedans and Hindus."[97]

The Nazi-like spirit that pervaded the British circles during 1857 is best expressed in the words of Gen. Nicholson, "the hero of the mutiny," who wrote to his friend, Edwards, who also became famous during this period: "Let us propose a Bill for flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi The idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening. I wish I were in that part of the world, that if necessary, I might take the law into my own hands."[98]

Even the court-martial law and formalities were not observed. "Officers as they went to sit on the court-martial, swore that they would hang their prisoners, guilty or innocent and, if any dared to lift up his voice against such indiscriminate vengeance, he was instantly silenced by the clamours of his angry comrades. Persons condemned to death after a hasty trial were mocked at and tortured by

ignorant privates before their execution, while educated officers looked on and approved."[99]

Below is the graphic account of what the British did in Delhi after its seizure, written by an insurgent leader and sufferer himself:

"Then the Christians killed the great officials and notables living in the vicinity and suburbs; (they) usurped their lands and property, houses and mansions, chattels and wealth, and their arms and goods, horses and elephants, and their he-camels and she-camels; (they) annihilated them with all their families and children although they had become their subjects and had submitted to them because of fear and expectations.... They looted first whatever gold and silver was found with the captives, and also plundered their covering sheets, clothes, *tahbands* and trousers. Then they sent them to their officers who sentenced them to death by hanging or beheading. None escaped these killings, neither the young nor the invalids, nor the nobles, nor the low-born. Thus the number of those who were beheaded or hanged reached up to thousands."[100]

Lord Elphinstone wrote to Sir John Lawrence about the British sack of Delhi in the following words: 'After the siege was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply heartrending. A wholesale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend or foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadirshah."[101] The author of *Qaysar-ul-Tawarikh* writes that "the number of persons executed in Delhi was 27,000."[102]

Below is another British contemporary account of what happened in Delhi: "I have given up walking about the backstreets of Delhi, as yesterday an officer and myself had taken a party of 20 men out patrolling, and we found 14 women with their throats cut from ear to ear by their own husbands and laid out in their shawls. We caught a man there who said he saw them killed, for fear they should fall into our hands; and showed us their husbands who have

done the best thing they could afterwards and killed themselves." [103]

. In the *History of the Siege of Delhi*, written by an officer who served on active service, it is graphically described what the British officers did on the way from Ambala to Delhi "Hundreds of Indians were condemned to be hanged before a court-martial in a short time and they were most brutally and inhumanly tortured, while scaffolds were being erected for them. The hair on their heads were pulled by bunches, their bodies were pierced by bayonets and then they were made to do that to avoid which they would think nothing of death or torture—cows' flesh was forced by spears and bayonets into the mouth of the poor and harmless Hindu villagers." [104]

How the sepoy and the civilian, the guilty and the innocent alike were butchered by the British victors after the capture of Lucknow is described below by one of them, "at the time of the capture of Lucknow—a season of indiscriminate massacre—such distinction was not made and the unfortunate who fell into the hands of our troops was made short work of—sepoy or Oudh villager it mattered not,—no questions were asked; his skin was black, and did not that suffice? A piece of rope and the branch of a tree or a rifle bullet through his brain, soon terminated the poor devil's existence." [105]

What happened in the countryside, between Banaras, Allahabad and Kanpur during General Neill's march through the area is described by Kaye and Malleson in the following words

"Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite 'in an artistic manner,' with mango trees for gibbets and elephants as drops, the victims of this wild justice being strung up, as though for past-time, in 'the form of a figure of 8.'" [106]

The British atrocities went so far that liberal elements

in British national life became anxious about British liberties themselves. Sir Charles Dilke wrote in *Greater Britain*, "those who doubt that Indian military service make soldiers careless of men's lives, reckless as to the rights of property, and disgraceful of human dignity, can hardly remember the letters which reached them in 1857, in which an officer in high command during the march upon Kanpur reported, 'good bag today, polished off rebels,' it being borne in mind that the 'rebels' thus hanged or blown from the guns had not taken any arms, but villagers apprehended 'on suspicion.' During this march, atrocities were committed in the burning of villages and massacre of innocent inhabitants at which Mohamed Toglak himself would have stood ashamed, and it would be to contradict all history to assert that a succession of such deeds would not prove fatal to our liberties at home."[107]

Pandit Nehru has rightly stated the problem of race mania as it faced our insurgent ancestors and faced us subsequently in the whole course of our struggle for freedom. "We in India have known racialism in all its forms ever since the commencement of British rule. The whole ideology of this rule was that of the Herrenvolk and the master race, and the structure of Government was based upon it; indeed the idea of a master race is inherent in imperialism. There was no subterfuge about it, it was proclaimed in unambiguous language by those in authority. More powerful than words was the practice that accompanied them, and generation after generation and year after year, India as a nation and Indians as individuals, were subjected to insult, humiliation, and contemptuous treatment."[108]

There are some eminent politicians as also historians in India who plead let bygones be bygones and that we should not stir up the memory of these atrocities during the centenary year. This would be not only a suppression of history but also mean our unwillingness to learn from our own history and experience.

Our forefathers suffered and bled during 1857. Subse-

quent generations kept up the struggle and went on making the needed sacrifice. If after independence we forget our past experience and began to consider British imperialism as our new friend instead of our traditional foe, we will not be able to safeguard Indian independence nor discharge India's duty towards struggling colonial peoples in Asia and Africa.

V. WHY FAILURE ?

The causes of the failure of the 1857 revolt have agitated the historians, both British and Indian. The early British historians stressed the fact that the rebel side failed because they were not well organised, not united enough and could not throw up an effective military leadership The Indian historians have gone deeper into the problem and related the failure to the very character of the Indian insurgent leadership, that they were backward and feudal. From justified criticism of the then Indian leadership some Indian historians tend to deny the very national character of the uprising and they even make their criticism of the rebel leadership in doctrinaire and unhistorical terms.

Both Dr. Sen, who has written the latest official history of 1857 for the Government of India, and Dr. R. C. Majumdar, who was first entrusted with the same job but later produced a volume of his own, with various degrees of emphasis state that none of the rebel leaders were moved by pure patriotism but by self interest.

We have earlier shown that the political and economic policies being pursued by the British rulers on the eve of 1857 were such as to turn every section of the Indians from the topmost Indian ruler to the poorest Indian peasant and artisan against their regime. If in such circumstances a section of the Indian feudals joined a popular armed rebellion whose avowed object, on all accounts, was to expel the foreigner they did objectively play a patriotic role. To deny this would be to give up the standpoint of historical

objectivity and adopt the standpoint of unalloyed subjectivism.

During 1857 the class interests of a section of the Indian feudals coincided with national interests, against British rule, and they played an active part in the national uprising. This does not imply that they had not very serious limitations and grave failings from which the national revolt greatly suffered. But criticism of the actual role played by a class in a national uprising should not be confused with the evaluation of that role itself.

It is not true that the feudals have never played a positive patriotic role in history. We admire the non-dogmatism of the Soviet statesmen and historians when they glorify the patriotism of the Russian feudal generals and leaders who organised the resistance to Napoleon in the early 19th century. We admire the struggle of the Polish people against partition and for the liberation of their fatherland which was led by Polish feudals. We admire the heroic and dogged struggle of the Italian people for the unification and independence of their motherland which was led not only by revolutionary democrats like Mazzini and Garibaldi but in which Count Cavour and the King of Piedmont also played their part. We recognise the patriotic role of the feudals in other countries but not our own!

It is only when we admit the positive patriotic role of the insurgent feudal leaders that we can critically examine the practice and the serious weakness they imported into the conduct and leadership of the uprising. Such a realistic standpoint alone will enable us to understand scientifically the role of the feudal patriots during 1857 national uprising and our subsequent national development.

Once again let us examine, as a test case, the picture of Oudh left by the contemporary chroniclers, mostly British.

Russell's account below gives a picture of the role of the Oudh Queen-Mother, the talukdars, the armed peasant

volunteers and the rebel sepoys and their mutual relations during 1857, the second phase of the revolt:

"The great bulk of the sepoy army is supposed to be inside Lucknow but they will not fight as well as the Matchlockmen of Oudh who have followed their chiefs to maintain the cause of their young King, Birjis Kadr and who may be fairly regarded as engaged in a patriotic war for their country and their sovereign. The sepoys during the siege of the Residency never came on as boldly as the zamindari levies and Nirjeibs. The Begum exhibits great energy and ability. She has excited all Oudh to take up the interests of her son and the chiefs have sworn to be faithful to him. We affect to disbelieve his legitimacy but the zamindars who ought to be better judges of the fact accept Birjis Kadr without hesitation. Will the Government treat these men as rebels or honourable enemies? The Begum declares undying war against us. It apears from the energetic characters of these Ranees and Begums that they acquire in their zenanas and harems a considerable amount of actual mental power and, at all events become able *intrigantes*. Their contests for the ascendancy over the minds of men give vigour and acuteness to their intellect."[109]

Lord Canning also debated the problem whether the zamindars and talukdars were moved only by their narrow class interests or the issue stood transcendentalised as one of national sentiment leading to national revolt. In his answer to Sir James Outram he wrote: "You seem to think that the rajas and zamindars of Oudh have risen because they have personally suffered by our land revenue assessment. But, in the opinion of the Governor-General, this requires some more thought. More thorough-going hatred could hardly have been shown by any feudatories than was shown by the Rajas of Chanda, Bhinja and Gonda. Not a single village of the first of these had been taken by us. Not only that but even his tribute had been reduced. The second one was also treated as generously. Of the four

hundred villages of the third, only three had been taken and, in exchange for that, his tribute had been reduced by ten thousand rupees

"By the change of rulers, no one had gained more than the youthful Raja of Nowpara. As soon as the English Government came in, we gave him one thousand villages, and, setting aside all other claimants, we appointed his mother as his guardian. But from the first her army has been fighting us at Lucknow. The Raja of Dhura, too gained enormously by the changes. But his own men attacked Captain Hursey, captured his wife, and sent her to prison at Lucknow.

"Ashraf Bakshkhan, the Talukdar persecuted by his late master, was made at once sole owner of all his property. But, from the beginning, his hatred of us has been most keen. These and other similar examples go to show very clearly that not mere personal loss, due to our rule, has been responsible for the rising of the zamindars and Rajas against us."[110]

The above is the brighter side of the story, amidst the fire of battle. The seamy side of the life and conduct of state affairs in the Oudh Court has been described by a learned patriotic eye-witness, a feudal Ulema Allamah Fazle Haq. His account covers the last phase of the uprising when the insurgents were losing and the British winning:

"All the officers of his (Nawab's) Government and the Ministers of the State were worthless, timid and cowardly and were foolish and dishonest; they were neither wise nor trustworthy ... Amongst them were illiterates, ease-loving, impertinent, noise-making, lazy and feeble fellows and flatterers, hangers-on and sycophants. They broke their pledges and promises and exchanged *kufr* for *iman*. They acted as hypocrites, began to favour the Christians, joined them and helped them to achieve victory."[111]

The above describes in plain and blunt words the moral weakness prevalent in a feudal court and leadership. Eve-

luating the role of the Oudh feudal leadership during the uprising, the picture that emerges is as follows During the first phase of the uprising the talukdars and zamindars with a few exceptions, joined the rebellion but on the whole did not play a very active role; they were waiting and watching to see which side wins, during the second phase of the uprising which begins with Lord Canning's March 1858 Proclamation confiscating the lands of all except the six specified talukdars, the landlords as a body threw themselves heart and soul into the popular rebellion; during the third phase of the uprising following the fall of Lucknow and as it became more and more evident that the British were winning, these feudal leaders began seeking terms with the national enemy and one after another made their submission to the British rulers. Even the Oudh Queen-Mother, who on the whole played a patriotic role, sent her Vakil to the British High Command while herself retreating towards Nepal with the remnant of her troops and supporters Feudal patriotism was thus double-faced. During the upward rise of the revolutionary upsurge, moved by growing popular pressure and sharing the general national hatred of foreign rule they played a positive patriotic role; but when the same upsurge began subsiding and the revolutionary popular forces began disintegrating, the real weakness of their feudal class character was revealed, they acted as cowards or traitors The feudals as a class thus played a dual role, neither pure patriotic nor down-right selfish and treacherous.

As the virtues of feudal patriots, heroism, courage and fidelity were symbolised in the Rani of Jhansi, Kunwar Singh, Tatya Tope and Maulavi Ahmadullah, so were all the weaknesses of a decaying feudal order—selfishness, cowardice and treachery—highlighted in the feudal leadership in Delhi.

This is evident enough from the account of Allamah Fazle Haq who was closely associated with the Emperor and his Court It is worth quoting at some length:

"He (Bahadur Shah) had his own Wazir (Hakim Ahsanullah) and staff; he was advanced in years but was inexperienced, he was very old and was, in reality, governed by his wife (Zeenat Mahal) and Wazir. The said Wazir was a high authority but in fact he was a friend of the Christians and had excessive love for them and was a bitter enemy o ftheir opponents. The same was the case with some of the members of his (Emperor's) family; some of them were near to him and his throne and were in his confidence....

"He issued no orders according to his independent opinion and could not understand (what was) good and evil. He could not decide anything openly or in secret, and had no power of doing harm or good to anyone.. .

"(Bahadur Shah) appointed as officers of the army some of his sons and grandsons, who were stupid, dishonest, and cowards. They hated honest and wise persons. They had never witnessed a battle nor had they any experience of the blows of swords and lances. They selected men from the gutter for their society and consultation. These inexperienced fellows drowned themselves in the ocean of luxuries and extravagance and submerged themselves in the flood of debauchery. They were poverty stricken and (suddenly) they became opulent, when they became opulent, they took to a life of dissipation. They obtained enormous sums from the people under the pretext of securing provision for the army and ate themselves all that they got. The leading-most of the prostitutes made them negligent in the matter of leading the rebel forces and their association with mistresses kept them from marching in the night with the army.... They passed their nights in sleeping and their days in intoxication. When they woke up and came to their senses, they felt embarrassed and amazed." [112]

This revealing account of the Allamah is borne out by the British historians, officials and the spies as well.

On May 16, Chunilal recorded in his Diary that the rebel sepoys captured a letter from Ahsanullah to the British

laying siege outside, which cursed the sepoys and promised to help the British get Delhi in case they agreed to acknowledge Mirza Jawan Bakht, Bahadur Shah's son by Zeenat Mahal, as the heir apparent. The sepoys angrily assembled at the palace using "violent language and harsh vociferations" and demanded the head of Ahsanullah and the custody of Zeenat Mahal "as a hostage for the King's loyalty."

Greathed who was attached to the Delhi Field Forces as the Political Agent of the Lt.-Governor of N. W. Provinces wrote in his letter dated August 23:

"An emissary came out from Zeenat Mahal, the favourite wife of the King, a great political personage, offering to exercise her influence with the King, to bring out some arrangements."[113] Again on August 19, Greathed wrote. "I am beginning to get letters from the Princes, declaring they have been all along fondly attached to us, and that they only want to know what they can do for us."[114] In his letter of August 6, Greathed informed Sir William Muir that Metcalfe had received a letter from the King asking for his health—a polite feudal method of building contact, etc.

After assembling all the known evidence together, Dr. Sen comes to the following conclusion about the offer of the treacherous gang inside the Mahal Court. "The plan was simple. If the British authorities agreed to guarantee the old pension and the privileges of the King and restore the *status quo ante bellum*, his party would contrive to destroy the bridge of boats, win over the cavalry and with their help overpower the infantry and admit the British into the city. The military position of the British, however, had considerably improved.... (they) refused to listen to these proposals."[115]

The effect on the rebel population of these all-sided treacherous activities in high quarters was to sow confusion and spread demoralisation. It severely damaged the morale of the insurgent sepoys. The British officials were aware of this situation. "Having.... no confidence in their leaders,

they (insurgent sepoys) always met us with what may be described as nervous hesitation...."[116]

We have analysed above the role of one section of the Indian feudals, the disinherited and dispossessed ones. But there was another equally, if not more important section of the feudals, the ruling princes of India. So widespread was the anti-British feeling that it had penetrated inside all the Indian darbars. There was an organised faction in every darbar which stood for active support to the national insurrection. Most of the princes played what Savarkar calls a "dubious role"[117] or Innes describes as "passiveness,"[118] i.e., they maintained an attitude of formal loyalty to the British and acquiesced in whatever resources in money and armed forces they took from their State but really adopted an attitude of "wait and watch." An important section of the princes, however, actively and wholeheartedly sided with the British from the beginning. As the revolutionary tide turned, all of them hastened to demonstrate their loyalty to the British.

The British government, after the outbreak of the revolt, was not certain of the loyalty of the Indian princes and kept a watchful eye on them and the Residents did everything possible to win their active help or at least to keep them passive. The insurgents eagerly awaited the princes to join them along with their subjects. They occupied a strategic place and their role was of decisive importance in deciding the fate of the struggle.

What made the princes so devoid of national sense and hang on to British power in such a critical hour in the life of our country? The answer lies in the corrupting influence of the system of subsidiary alliances to which they had already fallen victims, under which the Company's troops were stationed in every State and the British Resident or Agent became the virtual ruler. Sir Thomas Munro writing to the Governor-General has described this system in the following words: "It has a natural tendency to render the Government of every country in which it exists weak

and oppressive; to extinguish all honourable spirit among the higher classes of society, and to degrade and impoverish the whole people. The usual remedy of a bad Government in India is a quiet revolution in the palace, or a violent one by rebellion, or foreign conquests. But the presence of a British force cuts off every chance of remedy, by supporting the Prince on the throne against every foreign or domestic enemy."[119]

Let us examine a little concretely and in the words of the British authors themselves how the princes saved the British during the 1857 national revolt.

Hyderabad was the key to the South but the Nizam actively lined up behind the British usurpers. Norton admitted: "If Hyderabad had risen, we could not escape insurrection practically over the whole of the Deccan and Southern India."[120]

The princes of Rajasthan who claimed hoary descent and great martial traditions let the British use their troops for the suppression of the national uprising and they belied the hopes of their own people and of the rest of India that they would join the anti-British crusade. Malleson states: "Had Rajputana risen, it is difficult to see how Agra could have held out, how our force before Delhi could have maintained its ground."[121]

In Central India, Gwalior occupied a key place. Popular pressure on the Scindia was very great but he resisted it. The anonymous author of the Red Pamphlet writes: ".... Had he (Scindia) put himself at their (his own eager soldiers) head and accompanied, likewise by his trusty Marhattas proceeded to the scene of action, the consequences would have been most disastrous to ourselves. He would have brought at least twenty thousand troops.... on our weak points. Agra and Lucknow would have at once fallen. Havelock would have been shut up in Allahabad; and either that fortress would have been besieged or the rebels, giving it a wide berth, would have marched through Banaras on to Calcutta. There were no troops, no fortifications to stop

them."[122] Innes states, "Scindia's loyalty saved India for the British."[123]

The Sikh princes of Patiala and Jind and the Nawab of Karnal put all their resources at the disposal of the British and undertook the task, with their levies, to keep the road from Ambala, the main British base, to Delhi open and thus enabled reinforcements from the Punjab to reach the British besiegers of the insurgent capital.

Marx, after reading the newspaper reports, recorded in his chronological notes: "Scindia loyal to the 'English dogs,' *nicht* so his 'troopers'; Rajah of Patiala—for shame—sends large bodies of soldiers in aid of the English !"[124]

The new revolutionary spirit had, however, entered the princely States, especially among their soldiers who actively emulated the example of their brother sepoys in the rest of India. The soldiers of the Maharaja of Indore revolted and forced the British to quit the State. The most dramatic event took place when the Rani of Jhansi and Tatya Tope reached Gwalior, the Scindia's soldiers came over to their side and the Scindia with a handful of loyal followers escaped to the British Fort at Agra. The troops of the Maharana of Udaipur sent for the defence of Agra were found to be "tampered with."[125] The Jaipur troops were sent "to restore order in Mathura and Gurgaon and while they declared their willingness to defend the European fugitives they refused to wage aggressive warfare."[126] Sihor Cavalry repeated the story. "The Kotah contingent sent for the defence of Agra revolted. The Bharatpur Horse deserted and the Karauli men did not prove loyal."

From the above Malleson concluded: "It was plainly shown that when the fanaticism of an oriental people is thoroughly roused, not even their Raja, their father as all consider him, their God as some delight to style him, not even their Raja can bend them against their convictions."[127] What the British imperialist historian characterises as "fanaticism" was the birth of a new consciousness, anti-British national sentiment and the break-up of traditional

feudal loyalties. Their Raja was no more their traditional "father" and certainly not their God. During 1857 while the princes were promising their loyalty to the British, their soldiers broke from them and proved their loyalty to their country.

The mass of the people in the native States were, however, yet under feudal political influence and awaited their Prince to give the lead. The princes thus could sit upon the popular discontent below, which sometimes burst forth into local risings only and so were easily suppressed. India's ruling princes thus saved the British Raj during the 1857 national uprising.

A section of historians of the 1857 uprising have advanced the argument that it was not a national uprising because the whole of India did not join it and that it was localised within a specific area. Let us go by undisputed facts.

The vast area that rose up in rebellion consisted of the major part of North India, viz. Delhi, North Western Provinces based on Agra, Bundelkhand, Rohilkhand, Oudh, a large part of Bihar. Fitchett states: "Let it be remembered that the revolted districts equal in area France, Austria and Prussia put together, in population they exceeded them .... Some idea of the scale and completeness of the mutiny can be gathered from the single fact that every regiment of regular cavalry, ten regiments of irregular cavalry out of eighteen, and sixty-three out of seventy-four regiments of infantry, then on the strength of the Bengal army, disappeared finally and completely from its roster!"[128]

In a vast area, outlying this insurgent belt, in the Punjab, Rajputana, Maharashtra, Hyderabad, tribal areas of Bihar and Bengal there were sepoy mutinies, local rebellions and active anti-British conspiracies.

In the broad historical perspective of India's struggle against British domination what needs being stressed is not the limitation and narrowness of the 1857 uprising but

its sweep, breadth and depth. The 1857 uprising stands sharply demarcated from all the earlier anti-British wars of resistance fought on Indian soil.

The first is the sheer vastness of the area covered by the 1857 uprising and the still wider sympathy and solidarity it commanded. It is admitted by all historians and chroniclers, British and Indian alike, that the 1857 national insurrection was the biggest ever anti-British combine that had so far been massed in armed struggle against British authority in India.

The second is the qualitative difference between this and all other anti-British wars. In the earlier wars people of a single kingdom, which very often coincided with a specific nationality, fought single-handed. For example the Bengalis alone fought at Plassey. The same in the Karnatak and the Mysore and the Marahta, the Sikh and the Sind wars. Earlier attempts at broader combinations had failed. But during 1857 people of various castes, tribes, nationalities, religions, who had lived under different kingdoms rose together to end the British rule. It was an unprecendented unity of the Indian people. Marx, the most far-sighted thinker of the age, duly noted this new phenomenon:

"Before this there had been mutinies in the Indian army but the present revolt is distinguished by characteristic and fatal features. It is the first time that the sepoy regiments have murdered their European officers; that Mussalmans and Hindus, renouncing their mutual antipathies, have combined against the common masters; that 'disturbances beginning with the Hindus, have actually ended in placing on the throne of Delhi a Mohammedan Emperor'; that the mutiny has not been confined to a few localities."[109]

As it is important to stress the above positive aspect of 1857 national uprising, it is equally important to state its negative aspect and state which decisive areas and sections of the Indian people did not join the national uprising and how some were even led to supporting the British

side. There were several factors involved but let us examine the main, the national factor.

The Gurkhas and the Sikhs played a decisive role on the side of the British. The Nepal war had been fought by the British with the help of the Hindustani army. Rana Jung Bahadur who was centralising Nepal under Ranashahi was promised by the British a permanent subsidy and large tracts in Terai and he brought his Gurkha soldiers down, in the name of revenge, for subduing Oudh.

The Sikhs had their own historic memories against the Moghuls and after initial hesitation the British were able to recruit the unemployed soldiers of the Khalsa army and the retainers of the Sikh princes and sardars.

From the Marathas the heir of the Peshwas had risen in revolt but the Maratha princes had their own rivalries and historic feuds both with the Nizam in the South and the Moghuls in the North.

The Rajputana princes had their own historic memories of earlier Moghul and later Maratha domination, besides their being under British grip now.

These historic memories from the past of our feudal disunity kept the people of large parts of the country paralysed and moved by their feudal self-interest the Indian princes helped the British usurpers. Nehru has put the whole position in very succinct words: "The revolt strained British rule to the utmost and it was ultimately suppressed with Indian help."[180]

As it is true that the 1857 revolution was the biggest national uprising against British rule, so it is equally true that the British were able to suppress it by using Indians against Indians. Divide and rule was the traditional British policy and they used it with devastating effect during 1857. Fitchett gleefully proclaims: "What a demonstration the whole story is, of the imperial genius of the British race! 'A nation,' to quote Hodson—himself one of the most brilliant actors in the great drama—'which could conquer a great country like the Punjaub with a Hindoostanee Army,

then turn the energies of the conquered Sikhs to subdue the very army by which they were tamed; which could fight out a position like Peshawar for years, in the very teeth of the Afghan tribes; and then, when suddenly deprived of the regiments which effected this, could unhesitatingly employ these very tribes to disarm and quell those regiments when in mutiny—a nation which could do this, is indeed, destined to rule the world!' "[131]

Innes put the matter in more diplomatic language and he gives the policy approach with which the British statesmen exploited the weakness of Indian life during 1857. "Our presence constituted the only safeguard against a recurrence of the internecine wars of old with all their attendant horrors of which the memories and traditions were still in force."[132]

It is necessary to pose the question, what enabled the British to exploit Indian disunity? The answer lies in the stage of political consciousness in India as a whole and among the different social strata.

The peasant was anti-British but his outlook was confined within his village, his political knowledge did not go beyond the affairs of the kingdom in which he lived under his traditional Raja.

The political-ideological leadership of the country was yet in the hands of the feudal ruling classes. They shared the general anti-British sentiment but they feared their feudal rivals more. They were a decaying class and their historic memories were only of the feudal past of disunity and civil wars and the vision of a united independent India could not dawn upon them.

Love of the country in those days meant love of one's own homeland ruled by one's traditional ruler. The conception of India as our common country had not yet emerged. Not only the feudal historic memories came in the way but the material foundations for it, the railways, telegraph, a uniform system of modern education, etc., had not yet been laid but had only begun.

The conception of India as common motherland grew later and the great experience of 1857 rising helped it to grow. The London *Times* duly noted the rise of this new phenomenon. "One of the great results that have flowed from the rebellion of 1857-58 has been to make inhabitants of every part of India acquainted with each other. We have seen the tide of war rolling from Nepal to the borders of Gujarat, from the deserts of Rajputana to the frontiers of the Nizam's territories, the same men over-running the whole land of India and giving to their resistance, as it were, a national character. The paltry interests of isolated States, the ignorance which men of one petty principality have laboured under in considering the habits and customs of other principality—all this has disappeared to make way for a more uniform appreciation of public events throughout India. We may assume that in the rebellion of 1857, no national spirit was roused, but we cannot deny that our efforts to put it down have sown the seeds of a new plant and thus laid the foundation for more energetic attempts on the part of the people in the course of future years."[133]

VI. FEUDAL REVIVALISM

What was the aim of the insurgents, what sort of a political and social order did they seek to establish in India? A sound characterisation of the 1857 struggle depends upon the correct answer to the above problem. For it will help to decide whether it was reactionary or progressive.

It is amazing that there is virtual agreement on this question between not only British and some eminent Indian historians but also some foremost Indian political leaders.

Pandit Jawahralal Nehru has stated his opinion thus: "Essentially it was a feudal outburst, headed by feudal chiefs and their followers and aided by the widespread anti-British sentiment.... Not by fighting for a lost cause, the feudal order, would freedom come."[134]

Dr. Majumdar's conclusion is: "The miseries and

bloodshed of 1857-58 were not the birthpangs of a freedom movement in India, but the dying groans of an obsolete aristocracy and centrifugal feudalism of the medieval age."[135]

Dr Sen, the official historian, improves upon and carries forward the Prime Minister's characterisation: "The English Government had imperceptibly effected a social revolution. They had removed some of the disabilities of women, they had tried to establish the equality of men in the eye of the law, they had attempted to improve the lot of the peasant and the serf. The Mutiny leaders would have set the clock back, they would have done away with the new reforms, with the new order, and gone back to the good old days when a commoner could not expect equal justice with the noble, when the tenants were at the mercy of the talukdars, and when theft was punished with mutilation. In short, they wanted a counter-revolution."[136]

It comes to this that the British government, though alien, was effecting a "social revolution" and the leaders of 1857, though conducting an armed struggle for independence were staging a counter-revolution! One wonders then why did the Indian people force the British rulers to quit India why did they not press them to stay on another hundred years to complete the "social revolution" and build socialism for us!

This theory of the insurgents setting the clock back which the British government was trying to put forward is neither new nor original but as old as Lord Canning and the first authoritative British historian of the 1857 uprising. In the words of Kaye, "He (Lord Canning) saw, indeed, that for some years preceding the outbreak the English in India, moved by the strong faith that was in them, had striven, with a somewhat intemperate zeal, to assimilate all things to their own modes of thought, and that the Old Man had risen against the New and resented his ceaseless innovations."[137]

One can understand British statesmen and historians

advancing the thesis of the Old Man vs. the New, of their own role being progressive and the insurgent cause reactionary, in sheer self-defence. But when Indian leaders and historians repeat the same old British thesis the least one can say is that they are mistaking the form for substance. It is true that the 1857 uprising was led by Indian feudals (but not them alone!) and they were not the makers of events, nor sole masters of India's destiny. There were other social forces of the common people in action during this struggle and they had brought new factors and ideas into play. It is a pity Drs. Majumdar and Sen and Pandit Nehru have given no thought nor weight to them. If we study them carefully and seriously, the conclusion is inescapable that during the 1857 national uprising, the popular forces were active enough, healthy in their aspirations and clear-headed enough in their ideas to prevent a reactionary feudal restoration in India.

One of the great positive achievements of the 1857 uprising acclaimed with justified pride by the Indian national movement has been the noble attempt to forge, and sustained efforts to maintain, against British machinations, Hindu-Muslim unity for the successful conduct of the struggle.

Playing upon Hindu-Muslim differences had become so much a part of the flesh and blood of the British representatives in India that Lord Canning spontaneously began thinking, when the first signs of the storm burst during May 1857, whether the Hindus or Muslims were behind it? Kaye states the problem and the significance of the new situation facing the British rulers: "But, before the end of the month of April it must have been apparent to Lord Canning, that nothing was to be hoped from that antagonism of Asiatic races, which had even been regarded as the main element of our strength and safety. Mohammedans and Hindus were plainly united against us."[118]

The British officials, however, did not give up but persisted in the policy of stirring Hindu-Muslim dissen-

sions. "I shall watch for the differences of feelings between the two communities," wrote Sir Henry Lawrence from Lucknow to Lord Canning on May 1857. The communal antipathy, however, failed to develop; Aitchison ruefully admits: "In this instance, we could not play off the Mohammedan against the Hindu."[139]

The insurgent leaders were fully aware of this disruptive British tactic. Allamah Fazle Haq, himself a Muslim revivalist, wrote: "They (the British) tried their utmost to break the revolutionary forces by their tricks and deceptive devices, make ineffective the power of the *Mujahids* and uproot them, and scatter and disrupt them.... No stone was left unturned by them in this respect."[140]

The insurgent leaders consciously laid great stress on Hindu-Muslim unity for the success of the struggle. Bahadur Shah, the sepoy leaders, the learned Ulema and Shastris, issued proclamations and *fatwas* stressing that Hindu Muslim unity was the call of the hour and the duty of all. In all areas liberated from British rule the first thing the insurgent leaders did was to ban cow-slaughter and enforce it. In the highest political and military organ of insurgent leadership Hindus and Muslims were represented in equal numbers.[141] When Bahadur Shah found that he could not manage the affairs of state, he wrote to the Hindu Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar that if "they would combine for the purpose (of annihilating the British) he would willingly resign the Imperial power into their hands."[142] An insurgent Sikh regiment in Delhi served under a Muslim commander.[143] Such instances can be multiplied.

The dominant outlook of the people was, however, religious in those days. The traditional Hindu-Muslim difference was there and there were revivalist ideologues, both Hindu and Muslim, the Wahabis being the most influential. The British Fifth Column inside the insurgent camp, therefore, took up the slogan of *jihad* to disrupt Hindu-Muslim unity. "Representations were made to the King

that tomorrow being the 22nd May, the last day of the Ramzan, he should issue orders for a *jihad* against the Hindus. . . . The King issued a proclamation by beat of drum that Hindus and Muslims must not quarrel. The Hindus closed all their houses for fear of their lives."[144] On May 20, "a deputation of Hindu officers arrived to complain of the war against Hindus being preached. The King replied: 'The Holy War is against the English: I have forbidden it against the Hindus.' "[145]

When the Id festival came, the King issued orders that "no cows were to be killed. . . .and if any Mahommedan should do so, he would be blown away from a gun." The friend of the British, "Hakim Ahsanullah Khan demurred to such an order, and said he would consult the Maulavis The King, on hearing this, became very angry, closed the audience and retired to his private apartments." General Bakht Khan "according to King's orders had it proclaimed that cow-killing in the city was forbidden."[146]

Dr. Majumdar is not correct when he states "The communal spirit was too deeply rooted to be wiped out by mere pious wishes, embodied in proclamations,"[147] and exaggerates the importance of a few isolated cases of communal riots that did take place. What is of real significance is the phenomenon that the British agents were able to provoke so few communal riots and the insurgent leaders were on the whole able to maintain successfully a Hindu-Muslim joint front during the struggle.

There is another very important aspect of this problem. Hindu-Muslim unity was one of the important keys in deciding the fate of the issue. The British side knew it and tried their hardest and best to disrupt it. The Indian side also knew it and did their utmost to realise and maintain it. But this by itself would be a static statement of the problem. The better Hindu-Muslim unity was forged in the insurgent camp, the longer the struggle could last; the longer the struggle lasted, the more chances the popular forces got to come to the fore and the more the ideological-

political influence of feudal forces became weakened; the more the feudal forces became weakened the less chances were left of a feudal restoration. Such is the dialectics of all popular and national struggles. During the last phase of the struggle in 1857-58, the feudal forces stood thoroughly exposed and weakened. The popular forces were not yet powerful, conscious and organised enough to overwhelm them and carry on the struggle to victory. What actually took place was British victory and not feudal restoration. When the modern national movement began in the next generation, the glorious heritage of Hindu-Muslim unity was taken over from the 1857 struggle and the next two generations gave a more and more democratic programme to the conception of Hindu-Muslim united front against British domination.

The British side also learnt its lesson from this historic phenomenon. Forrest in his Introduction to State Papers, 1857-58, states:

"Among the many lessons the Indian Mutiny conveys to the historian, none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmins and Sudras, Hindus and Mohammedans could be united against us, and that it is not safe to suppose that the peace and stability of our dominions, in any great measure, depends on the continent being inhabited by different religious systems... .The mutiny reminds us that our dominions rest on a thin crust ever likely to be rent by titanic forces of social changes and religious revolutions."[143]

VII. THE INSURGENT SEPOY ARMY

The 1857 insurrection was not only initiated by the rebel sepoy army of the East India Company, but both in its further conduct and leadership it played a big and positive role.

It was inevitable in the circumstances then prevailing that this national uprising should have begun with the Indian sepoys. Marx, writing at that time, promptly

noted its significance: "It is evident that the allegiance of the Indian people rests on the fidelity of the native army, in creating which the British rule simultaneously organised *the first general centre of resistance* which the Indian people was ever possessed of."[149]

The Indian sepoy army had grievances of its own which arose from the condition of their being a mercenary army of an alien regime. They had not only religious grievances about interference with their religious rites and customs, but also economic grievances about pay, allowances, etc., and above all national grievances which emerged from their being considered in every material respect as inferior to the British irrespective of merit and experience.

The Indian army had not only grievances of its own and was the most organised force of the Indian people but as sons of the Indian people they shared the experience that was the lot of the Indian people under the British raj.

The sepoys as a class were of Indian peasant origin and the bulk of the Bengal army came "from the peasantry of Oudh."[150] They were thus very much aware of all the sufferings of peasant households in the Indian countryside and the loss of the independence of their homeland, that followed the annexation of Oudh, made the Bengal army react to the factor of national humiliation more acutely and sharply than the rest of the Indian army.

This sepoy army, related to the Indian people as the foetus is related to the mother's womb, had lost all respect for its British masters and was becoming conscious of its own strength and strategic role. During the Sikh and Afghan wars, the sepoy had seen not only that the British were not unconquerable but he had also seen the weakness, the cowardice and selfishness of the British soldiers and officers, as an army of aggression and usurpation, when faced with failures. In this background the Indian sepoys began to think of the significance of their own preponderance as compared to the British personnel in the military forces holding down India for the British.

John Lawrence, the British Chief of the Punjab during 1857 58, duly noted this: "Was it to be expected that the native soldiery, who had charge of our fortresses, arsenals, magazines and treasuries, without adequate European control, should fail to gather extravagant idea of their own importance?"[151]

From Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's statement one gets a more adequate idea of the sentiments prevailing among the Indian sepoys:

"They looked upon the European portion of the army as a myth and thought that the many victories which the English had gained were gained entirely by their prowess. A common saying of theirs was that they had enabled the English to conquer Hindustan from Burmah to Kabul.... The people were perfectly aware that the Government were almost entirely dependent on the sepoy army; when, therefore, it became known that that army had revolted, the people also became riotous. They no longer were in awe of the Government."[152]

Such an Indian army, drawn from the ranks of the Indian peasantry had come to the conclusion from its own experience, that while earlier it had helped the English to conquer India, it must now take the lead to liberate India from the English yoke Such an army could be no tame camp-follower of the Indian feudal leaders but it put its own imprint on the course and development of the revolutionary struggle.

The representative of the new spirit in the army was General Bakht Khan. He was an ordinary Risaldar of Artillery in the Bareilly bridge. After liberating Bareilly and establishing an insurgent government there he marched with the whole brigade to Delhi. Real feudal anarchy and utter chaos prevailed in the capital city and the insurgent sepoys decided to intervene and sent Bakht Khan as their representative to Bahadur Shah. Jeewanlal notes in his Diary under July 2:

"Mohommed Bakht Khan offered his services as

Commander-in-Chief of the forces, with a view to enforce general discipline. The King grasped his hand in token of friendship. On returning to the troops Bakht Khan acquainted the Subahdars with the King's acceptance of his service and allegiance and obedience. .. A shield, a sword and the title of General were bestowed on Mohommed Bakht Khan and he was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the whole of the forces. A proclamation was issued ordering the attendance of all officers in command to receive instructions from M. Bakht Khan.... Mohommed Bakht informed the King that if any of the princes attempted to plunder the city he would cut off their nose and ears. The King replied, 'You have full authority. Do whatever seems good to you.' "[15]

It was a new and unique phenomenon in Indian national history. Here was an insurgent Indian army dictating terms to the Moghul Badshah whom it had itself crowned as the Shah-en-Shah of Hindustan sometime earlier. It was certainly not an army as Akbar or Aurangzeb had. It was a revolutionary army which shared the leadership with the feudal ruling class but enforced its own terms to control and check them. It was an army of a new type, far from being a feudal mercenary army.

This army did not demand from the Badshah only the recognition of and full authority for their leader Bakht Khan. It also created a collective organ of revolutionary struggle and new power in the "Court of Mutineers" described at length in the valuable paper of Talmiz Khaldun, published in this volume. It had a written Constitution, on the whole democratic. Its function was the overall military leadership of the insurrectionary forces and the governance of the capital city and the country. Its leader Bakht Khan was styled not only a General but also a Governor.

The relationship of the Court to the Moghul Badshah is important. The Court, through majority vote, exercised the right not only to take all decisions regarding

military operations against the British but also passed decrees and laws for the civil administration of the country. Its decrees and proclamations went to the Badshah for signature. In his statement during his trial Bahadur Shah stated that he had to sign whatever documents were placed before him and sometimes even on blank sheets! The centre of supreme authority was the Court itself and on the whole it was a system approximating constitutional monarchy.

The sepoys introduced a real plebeian atmosphere in the Red Fort which was steeped in the medieval feudal traditions, in customs, manners, etc., of the past. The sepoys marched with their army boots on into the Diwan-i-Khas, the cavalrymen tied up their horses in its compound to the bewildered surprise and shock of the Moghul Badshah and his courtly retinue.

It is important to note how the sepoy leadership and the Court handled the Moghul princes, with their wasteful and wayward ways, their selfishness, cowardice and degeneration and the inevitable demoralisation and disruptiveness it created. Jeewanlal, as the faithful reporter of the British, has carefully noted what happened. On July 3 "an order was passed whereby the royal princes were relieved from all further duties connected with the army."[154]

The princes were collecting money from the rich in the name of conducting the war against the British but appropriating it themselves while the royal treasury was empty and the sepoys starved. Raising adequate financial resources to feed the army and run the insurgent government was the most serious problem facing the Court and on this issue it took up a sharp attitude. On July 6 "the King openly censured Mirza Abdullah and the other princes for their bad behaviour and ordered them to disgorge the money they had forcibly taken from the bankers, otherwise their allowance would be stopped."[155] On August 17 Bakht Khan again complained to the King about the princes and he passed orders that "when money was requisitioned it

was to be paid to the General in the presence of citizens."[156] On August 18 "orders were sent to the bankers to negotiate directly with General Bakht Khan."[157] On August 31 the members of the Court "summoned the bankers and asked them for money. The bankers replied, 'The Princes have already taken three lacs and seventy thousand rupees from us and we can give no more.' The Court was displeased with this answer and issued a proclamation that no more money was to be given to the Princes."[158] The Court was no more operating through the King but appealing to the people direct.

On September 9 "The King ordered the arrest of the Princes who had misappropriated money collected for the pay of the sepoys."[159] By this time it was already too late, before the month was out Delhi fell. The sepoys were from outside Delhi and as the princes had some social base in Delhi enforcing their arrest may have opened the front the enemy, they were not arrested.

Holmes records, "On one occasion some hundreds of hungry sepoys rushed into the hall, and thronged round him (the King), demanded that he should imprison his sons who had embezzled their pay, and swore that if their pay were not given to them, they would murder him and his family."[160]

In the economic measures passed by the Court, the peasant origin of its armed base stands clearly revealed. The conduct of the anti British war and the normal needs of the administration demanded big financial resources. Heavy taxation was imposed on the rich, well able to bear it and the poor were free from its burdens. A *parwanah* on the land issue was also issued, promising to change the land system of the British and ensuring "land to the tiller."[161]

The wholesalers of food, etc., had gone in for hoarding and were exploiting the war situation to extort fantastic prices from the consumers. The misery of the common people was great. On September 5, "orders were issued to the police to appoint a 'Punch' everyday to fix the prices

of food (A Punch is a Committee of five traders)."[162] The City Kotwal issued regular official price lists to the thanedars.

It is very difficult to state how much of the above was actually implemented and how much sabotaged by the still powerful feudals and compradors and their agents in the administration, and what could not be implemented because of the shortness of time and the difficulties of the situation of a city under siege. But the aspirants, ideas and line of action of the most vital and important section of the rebel leadership do stand out sharp and clear.

Another important function discharged by the sepoys was to exercise revolutionary vigilance against the British Fifth Column. They were no respectors of persons, even the tallest in the feudal hierarchy. Jeewanlal's Diary is full of incidents like the following:

"The sepoys went to the Palace in great anger.. . threatened to kill Ahsanullah Khan....and also threatened to take away Zeenat Mahal Begum Sahib and keep her as hostage for the King's loyalty."[163]

The descendant of the Moghul dynasty could never imagine that he would be faced with such an over-all situation and that too after being enthroned on his hereditary throne! Buffeted and bewildered by the new currents of thought and action, he declared his desire to go to Mecca.

Does the above help to strengthen the thesis that the victory of the 1857 uprising would have led to the restoration of the feudal order and all that it implied, in India? On the contrary, it utterly demoralised the topmost feudals, including the Moghul Badshah, his favourite Begum and the mass of Shahzadas who all decided to make their peace with the British while the Badshah also covered it up by talking of going away to Mecca. Such a development took place all over the country, wherever the insurrectionary forces were active, the place of refuge or pilgrimage of the Indian feudals became the nearest British camp.

The insurgent sepoys, the most active and influential of the insurrectionary forces, while they compromised with a section of Indian feudals in the interest of the common struggle against the British, took great pains to create and establish a new supreme organ of struggle and power in the form of the Court of Mutineers which embodied a pattern of soldier-peasant democracy in the then prevailing circumstances within the framework of a constitutional monarchy.

It was admitted not only by Bahadur Shah before the British Court but in other accounts as well that the insurgent leaders and the Court got the King write letters and issue proclamations which they thought were needed in the interests of the struggle. While Bahadur Shah was building contact with the British, he was made to write to the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Alwar that he wanted their help and cooperation "to organise and administer the very important affairs of the Empire at this juncture, he wished to form a confederacy of States; and if the States he now addressed with these letters would combine for the purpose, he would willingly resign the imperial power into their hands."[164] We have already dealt with the importance of this move as an attempt to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity. The idea of a confederacy of Indian States, as the form of an Independent India, to emerge out of the victorious struggle against the British power, is another very significant new idea born in the fires of this revolt.

In this same connection, the words of the mass oath which Rani Lakshmi Bai administered to the insurgent sepoys after the loss of Jhansi, on the eve of the battle of Kalpi the significant: "We shall not give up Kalpi as long as we live; with our own hands shall we not our Azadshahi bury!"[165] A Rani, to inspire the sepoys to fight to death or victory in 1858, uses the *new* concept Azadshahi, not the Moghul Badshahi nor the Maratha Peshwashahi but plain Azadshahi and this when Nana's representative, his own brother, was present on the spot and she herself was a

Maharashtrian! Sri Vrindavanlal Varma of Jhansi, who has written a famous Hindi historical novel on the Rani, informs me that he has read a letter written by the Rani to Raja Mardan Singh in which she uses the modern term swaraj.

At Lucknow "the boy King of Oudh was the merest puppet and the power was in the hands of the sepoys, who elected their officers and if they chose, degraded them again."[166] There was also a Court at Lucknow as at Delhi.[167]

The new winds were thus not confined to Delhi; they were blowing all over the land where the insurrection had gained some strength and they certainly did not herald the restoration of the feudal order.

Inside the disintegrating feudal order that was India of those days, new currents of democratic thought and practice were arising, they were not yet powerful enough to break the old feudal ideological bonds and overwhelm British authority; they were menacing enough to make the real Indian feudals seek a new lease of life as a gift from the British after beseeching due forgiveness for having joined the insurgent cause.

The destruction of the ancient land system in India and the law on the alienation of land stirred the whole countryside into action against the government whose policies had made the old rural classes, from the zamindars to the peasants, lose their lands to the new section of merchants, moneylenders and Company's own officials, and which had played havoc with their life. The large-scale peasant participation in the 1857 uprising gave it a solid mass basis and the character of a popular revolt. The Indian peasants fulfilled their patriotic duty during 1857.

Peasants joined as volunteers with the insurgent forces and, though without military training, fought so heroically and well as to draw tributes from the British themselves, some of which we have already quoted. At the battle of Miaganj, between Lucknow and Kanpur, the Bri-

tish had to face an Indian insurgent force of 8,000, of whom not more than a thousand were sepoys.[168] At Sultanpur, another battle was fought by the insurgents with 25,000 soldiers, 1,100 cavalry and 25 guns and of these only five thousand were rebel sepoys![169] After the fall of Delhi, the British concentrated upon Lucknow. As the British massed all their strength against Lucknow so from the villages of Oudh came armed peasant volunteers for the last ditch defence of their capital city. In the words of Charles Ball, "The whole country was swarming with armed vagabonds hastening to Lucknow to meet their common doom and die in the last grand struggle with the Firangis."[170]

After the fall of Bareilly and Lucknow, the insurgents fought on and adopted guerilla tactics. Its pattern is contained in Khan Bahadur Khan's General Order "Do not attempt to meet the regular columns of the infidels because they are superior to you in discipline, *bandobast* and have big guns but watch their movements, guard all the ghats on the rivers, intercept their communications, stop their supplies, cut their *dak* and posts and keep constantly hanging about their camps, give them (the Firinghis) no rest !"[171]

Commenting on the above, Russell wrote in his *Diary*: "This general order bears marks of sagacity and points out the most formidable war we would encounter."[172] The heavy responsibility for carrying into practice the above line of action and aiding the scattered insurgent forces to prolong the anti-British war of resistance fell on the mass of the peasantry. All contemporary British chronicles of the story of this war in Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand, Oudh and Bihar contain numerous stories of how the Indian peasantry loyally and devotedly carried out the behests of the insurgent high command. Let us take only one example: "Even when the cause of the mutineers seemed to be failing, they testified no good will, but withheld the information we wanted, and often misled us."[173]

In a national uprising that has failed the role and

contribution of any class can best be estimated by the amount of sacrifice it makes. Measured in these terms, the peasantry is at the top of the roll of honour of the 1857 uprising. Holmes states: "The number of armed men, who succumbed in Oudh, was about 150,000, of whom at least 35,000 were sepoys."[174]

After noting above the contribution of the peasant in the 1857 war outside his own village, it is necessary to note and assess the nature and scope of the struggle he conducted inside his own village For that would decide the controversy current among Left circles whether it was a national or class war and what the alignment of class forces then was. Let us quote from the accounts of British eye-witnesses and officials who had first-hand experience and were directly concerned with the struggle.

Thornhill describes the beginning in these words:

"When the news spread that the King of Delhi was again seated on his throne, the villagers imagined that our dominion had ceased. The law had no longer terrors, every man who was strong enough commenced to do that which was right in his own eyes. The first proceedings everywhere were to take revenge on the *buniahs;* their houses were plundered; their account books burnt, themselves and their families often maltreated. . The new zamindars when strangers were everywhere ejected; if they belonged to the village they had to maintain their position by a struggle with the ancient proprietors, who now by force of arms sought to recover their inheritance."[175]

William Edwards who was in charge of Budaun district confirms the above. "By fraud and chicanery a vast number of the estates of families of rank and influence have been purchased by new men—chiefly traders and Government officials—and without character or influence over their tenantry. These men in a vast majority of instances, were also absentees, fearing or disliking to reside on their purchases, where they were looked upon as interlopers and unwelcome intruders. The ancient proprietors of the

alienated estates were engaged as tenantry of the lands once theirs; by no means reconciled to their change of position, but maintaining their hereditary hold as strong as ever over the sympathies and affections of the agricultural body, who were willing and ready to join their feudal superiors in any attempt to recover their lost position and regain possession of their estates.... None of the men who had succeeded them as landowners were possessed of sufficient influence or power to give me any aid in maintaining the public tranquillity....On the other hand, those who could really control the vast masses of the rural population were interested in bringing about a state of disturbance and general anarchy."[176]

The nature of the class alignment in the villages during the uprising is clearly indicated by Forrest: "In ejecting the moneyed classes, the old proprietors were assisted by their former tenants."[177]

Having noted the actual class set-up as it existed in the countryside during this national uprising let us examine the mode of operation of the insurgent rural masses in terms of what actually took place.

There are reports of various districts available, written by the district magistrates or divisional commissioners answering the General Order No. 212 of 30 April, 1858. Let us take a glance at the representative districts from the various regions of Uttar Pradesh, the Kurukshetra of the 1857 war. The orientation of these reports is imperialist, distorted, as evident from the very language they use but facts and not words matter and the imperialist jargon can also be easily transliterated.

About Meerut it is stated "The Goojars (an agricultural and cattle breeding caste) and released convicts immediately took to waylaying and robbing; the roads were closed and the posts were all stopped. On 11th and 12th of May, the Tehsil at Sardhana was attacked by Ranghurs (another agricultural caste) and Rajputs.... one Kulundar Khan, a Havildar at once proclaimed himself ruler...."

Shah Mal was the Jat insurgent leader of Baghpat. About him the report stated that he "attacked and plundered Baghpat and destroyed the bridge of boats on the Jumna, the direct and the only communication between Meerut and the Headquarters Camp of the British Army. On 9th of July another considerable body of rebels collected at Sikri after plundering Begumabad and offered a determined resistance to British troops. The inhabitants of Dhaulanah, aided by some rebels from Delhi, turned out the police officers and destroyed the Government records and buildings. The people of Pargana Baraut regularly collected and transmitted supplies to the rebels at Delhi through Shah Mal. On 16th of July, the British troops met with strong resistance by the inhabitants of village Busodh who had given such assistance to Shah Mal and where immense stores of grain were found collected for the Delhi rebels. The grain was so much in quantity that all the commissariat carriages procurable would have sufficed to remove only a small portion of it."[178]

In Saharanpur, "At first bankers were robbed, or had to pay for exemption from plunder; moneylenders and traders were forced to give up their books of accounts and vouchers for debts; old feuds were renewed; the first outbreaks were to pay off old feuds or to clear off accounts, or for the sake of plunder." About the Ranghurs it was stated: "It was impossible not to admire their bigoted daring, never deigning to ask for quarter, but turning at once upon their pursuers, though perhaps wretchedly armed with a gundashah (fodder-chopper) or some such weapon."[179]

In Muzaffarnagar, "violent crimes of all kinds were daily, almost hourly committed throughout the district not secretly or by night but openly and at noon-day.... The *bunyahs* and the Mahajans were in the majority of cases the victims, and fearfully have many of them been made to suffer for their previous rapacity and avarice."[180]

In Aligarh, "before the middle of the month (June) the Chohans (Rajput agriculturists) of the Parganah, intent on revenge, called in the Jats (another agricultural caste) to their help, attacked Khair, plundered and destroyed nearly all the Government buildings, as well as the houses of the *bunyahs* and Mahajans.... The records of the Sudder Kutchery and those from Tehsils were destroyed.... The large number of persons who had so much to gain from the overthrow of our Government were content to annex their lost estates and await the result of the struggle."[181]

In Muttra, "the disturbances were chiefly attacks on *bunyahs* and ejectment of new zamindars by the old.... The zamindars of all the villages along the road (to Agra) joined and assisted them (the insurgent sepoys).... The police and revenue establishments were everywhere ejected or if permitted to remain allowed to remain on mere sufferance."[182]

In Allahabad, "the cultivators and poorer classes still continued to look upon them (dispossessed landlords) with greater regard than the purchaser at auction, however long the latter may have been in possession of the property. The ex-zamindar and his family were still the most influential residents of the village.

"The auction purchaser, on the other hand, was generally a resident of the city, and never visited his village, except for the hateful purpose of collecting his rents or enforcing his decrees. The people, therefore, naturally sided with the zamindars to whom the outbreaks seemed a grand opportunity of recovering their position. They first set to work to destroy and plunder everything European, and took forcible possession of their estates Of course, the auction-purchasers were our friends, and rendered every assistance in their power for the restoration of order."[183]

In the eastern districts of Jaunpur "....not a semblance of authority was left to anyone. Those who had lost their estates under our rule thought this a good time

to regain them, those who had not thought they could make a little profit by plundering their weaker neighbours; the bolder spirits thought to secure more militant advantages by intercourse with the rebel powers in Oudh; and in this state of anarchy they remained till the arrival of the Goorkhas on September 8th who restored a semblance of authority to the British Government."[184]

In still eastern Gorakhpur "The Gautam Rajputs, under the instigation and sometimes under the personal command of the Raja of Nuggur, everywhere rose and dispossessed the present proprietors of all lands tradition assigned to their race.... At the same time, it was known that frequent meetings were being held by the Rajas of Nurhurpur, Nuggur, Sutasee and the Babus of Pandepur and others in which it had been decided to obtain assistance from Oudh.

"The first act of Mohamed Hussein after his assumption of power was to order all Government employees to enter his services on pain of punishment.... He maintained the existing fiscal and criminal jurisdictions to the great disgust of many of his partisans among the landholders, who objected that Thanedars were unknown under the 'Nawabee' as the district had become. The decrees of civil court were even executed on payment of half the amount adjudged.

"In the district those who had lost their estates through the agency of the civil courts, now ousted the purchasers and re-entered in possession; great search was also made for deeds and decrees."[185]

In southern Hamirpur "the great feature in the rebellion has been the universal ousting of all bankers, *banyas*, Marwaris, etc., from landed property in the district, by whatever means they acquired it, whether at auction, by private sale or otherwise, and also that the larger communities have profited immensely by the time of anarchy.... old scores were wiped out in blood."[186]

In the next door Banda, "the records torn up and scattered to the winds, in order, as they said, that no record of

their liabilities might remain to the new government....The villages rose in every direction.... Auction purchasers and decree-holders were ousted, travellers and merchandise plundered and the servants of Government compelled to fly for their lives; and in all instances, Government buildings and property of every description were plundered and destroyed....

"Tulwars and matchlocks were scarce in Bundelkhand. but armed with spears and scythes, the iron-bound lathis and extemporary axes, formed of chopping knives fastened on sticks, they imagined themselves to be warriors, chose their own Kings and defied all comers. Never was revolution more rapid, never more complete."[187]

Extracts like the above can be mulciplied indefinitely from all the districts in the insurgent provinces. From these accounts certain conclusions emerge very clearly about the nature of the struggle in the countryside during the 1857 national uprising. Firstly, that the rural population as a whole rose against the new land system imposed over their heads by the British rulers. Secondly, that the pattern of struggle was to eliminate the *new* landlords created under the British regime, destroy their records hound them out of villages and seize their lands and attack all the symbols of British authority especially the kutchery (law-court), the tehsil (revenue office) and the thana (the police outpost). Thirdly, the base of the struggle was the mass of the peasantry and the rural poor while the leadership was in the hands of the landlords dispossessed under the British laws Fourthly, this pattern of struggle fitted into the general pattern of the 1857 national uprising, the class struggle in the countryside was directed not against the landlords as a whole but only against a section of them, those who had been newly created by the British under their laws and acted as their loyal political supporters, i.e., it was subordinated to the broad need of national unity against the foreign usurper.

Talmiz Khaldun's thesis that during this uprising "The

Indian peasantry was fighting desperately to free itself of foreign as well as feudal bondage" and that "the mutiny ended as a peasant war against indigenous landlordism and foreign imperialism" is thus an exaggeration. There is no evidence whatsoever that the Indian peasantry during this struggle decisively burst through the feudal bonds either politically or economically to transform a broad-based national uprising into a peasant war. On the other hand all the evidence that is known is to the contrary.

In the district accounts quoted above the line of struggle adopted by the peasantry is against the new British-created landlords and not against the landlords as a whole, old and new. In the "Narrative of Events" about the other districts which are the most detailed contemporary accounts available, I have not come across any exidence except that confirming the alignment along lines quoted by me already. The British sources that Khaldun quotes show that the landlords were afraid of an uprising of the lower orders against the higher and that they tried to keep the struggle within the bounds that suited them; he quotes no evidence to prove that the agrarian struggle went beyond the confiscation and seizure of the lands of the new landlords, the auction-purchasers, etc., to the seizure and distribution of the landlords' lands as a class, towards implementing the slogan of "land to the tiller." The class fear of the landlords was a historical factor that made the landlords more easily and willingly surrender to the British but there are no historical facts to prove that the peasant struggle during 1857-58 went beyond the struggle against the newly created landlords to the stage of becoming a struggle against the landlords as a class, i.e., give it the character of a peasant war.

Again there were good ideological-political reasons for keeping the agrarian struggle thus confined and restricted to the struggle against a section of the landlords only, against that section which had dispossessed the mass of peasant-cultivators and old traditional landlords alike. Based on

common grievances, it was an uprising of all the rural classes against the non-rural, non-cultivating moneyed usurious elements, comprador creatures of the British regime and the selfish corrupt Indian officials who were seizing and grabbing their lands which they had owned and cultivated for generations.

In this set up the old landlords emerged as the leaders of the struggle because they were the *traditional* leaders of the countryside. The old village community was rapidly disintegrating, both as an economic and administrative unit, under the new forces set in motion by the British administration. But its psychological and social heritage, as is inevitable, had survived and become green again when the issue became one of joint struggle by the various elements which constituted the old village community, and owned all the lands, against the new land-grabbers who had seized their traditional lands, and the usurping foreign power that had made this possible through its laws, courts and administrative agency. Thus it was that the *traditional* leaders of the village became the *historical* leaders of the 1857 uprising in the countryside.

It is not that the wiser elements among the insurgent peasantry were not aware of their own class conflicts with these landlords but they seem to have thought it best not to bring this conflict to the fore and sound wisdom to deal with the main common enemy first. Holmes states: "The villagers had no reason to sympathise with the talukdars, who robbed them of their landed rights, but the talukdars, who robbed were their natural chiefs, under whose lead they must place themselves if they wished to render any serious fight against the alien intruders."[188]

Class struggle in the countryside did change its form but that followed the 1857 uprising and we shall deal with it later.

The ideological-political hold of the traditional landlords over the peasantry and other class did weaken the strength of the revolutionary forces during this uprising.

We have quoted above the Gorakhpur report which states that after liberating the area the landlord leadership tried to retain quite a lot of the old administrative set-up and that it caused discontent. In the Aligarh district report it is stated that after the local uprising a broad Panchayat was set up as the local organ of power but rival feudal leaders intrigued against it and one of them got the *parwanah* from "Waleedad Khan of Malagarh (who derived his title of 'Soobah' from the King at Delhi) who granted a sanad of 'Naib Soobadarship.' Armed with this they returned, declared their titles and were allowed to assume power." In Farrukhabad the old Nawab was made the ruler and the local representative of the Delhi Badshah and while the administration was run with the help of old feudals and the bulk of ex-British officials, the representatives of the sepoys intervened quite often as the voice of the people. It appears that in the districts and provinces under insurgent leadership the administration was much more under feudal influence than in Delhi. The panchayats came to life everywhere but they seem to have functioned as organs of struggle for uniting and mobilising the people and material resources for the atni British war, and not as organs of power except perhaps at the local village level. Delhi was in the hands of the insurgent sepoys; they had come in contact with the British, the urban centres, and had experience of the various parts of India and even neighbouring countries and were the most advanced section of the insurgent people in experience and understanding. Their people in their own villages had their limited local experience and were much more under traditional feudal ideological and political influence.

This does not mean that the insurgent peasants would have been conscious parties to or that the relative feudal influence over them could have led to the restoration of the old feudal order in India. The insurgent sepoys at Delhi who set up the Court and passed those democratic decrees were their own sons voicing their own aspirations

and reflected the advanced position which Indian peasants in soldiers' uniforms had already taken!

The Indian peasants made a compromise with the traditional landlords in the interests of the common struggle but the landlords became terrified by this alliance when they saw it in the living form of a revolutionary popular struggle. Gubbins who had wide personal experience of Oudh and other Eastern districts states, "much allowance should, no doubt, be made in considering the conduct of the Indian gentry at this crisis, on account of their want of power to resist the armed and organised enemy which had suddenly risen against us. The enemy always treated with the utmost severity those among their countrymen who were esteemed to be friends of the British cause. Neither their lives nor their property were safe. Fear, therefore, no doubt entered largely into the natives which induced many to desert us."[189]

Narrow class interest and fear of the "armed and organised" masses, whom the British rightly called "the enemy," ultimately led the Indian feudal gentry to desert the revolutionary struggle and seek terms with the foreign rulers. The situation led to feudal treachery and suppression of the national uprising, and not to the strengthening of feudalism in the minds and the later movement of the Indian peasantry and the people.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar himself quotes the Supreme Government "Narrative of Events" issued on September 12, 1857: "In consequence of the *general nature of the rebellion* and the impossibility of identifying the majority of the rebels, the Magistrate recommended the wholesale burning and destruction of *all villages* proved to have sent men to take *active part* in the rebellion."[190] This is how the British understood the peasant contribution to the 1857 uprising. Could there be a restoration of the feudal order in India on the shoulders of such a peasantry?

VIII. AFTERMATH AND LESSONS

The 1857 uprising is a historic landmark. It marks the end of a whole historic phase and the beginning of a new one. On the British side it finished the Company's rule and led to direct government under the British Crown. The period of rule of the merchant monopolists of the East India Company ended and the dominance of the industrial bourgeoisie of Britain in the affairs of India began. On the Indian side, the revolt failed but the Indian people got that experience which enabled them to build the modern Indian national movement on new foundations and with new ideas, and the lessons of 1857 proved inestimable Both sides drew and applied their lessons from the 1857 experience in the subsequent period. The British were the victors, they went into action soon; we were the vanquished, we took longer.

From their experience of the 1857 uprising the British rulers sharply changed their policy towards the Indian feudal elements, and discarding the old policy of attacking their interests, they adopted a new policy of reconciling them as the main social base of their rule in India. The Indian people from their experience of the Indian feudals drew the lesson for the next phase of their movement that their anti-British struggle to be successful must also be an anti-feudal struggle. Those who were so far regarded by the Indian people as their traditional leaders were now rightly considered as betrayers of the 1857 uprising and the Indian puppets of the British power.

As regards the Indian princes, the policy of annexations was given up. Queen Victoria in her Proclamation promised them: "We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own." Very candidly Lord Canning in his Minute of April 30 noted: "The safety of our rule is increased and not diminished, by the maintenance of native chiefs well affected to us."

How the Indian national movement understood the post 1857 British policy towards the princes is best reflected in Nehru's *Discovery of India* where he states that the

retention of the native states was designed to disrupt the unity of India,[101] Indian princes playing the role of Britain's fifth column in India.[102]

The Queen's Proclamation promised to "respect the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors" and that "in framing and administering the law due regard will be paid to the ancient rights, usage and customs of India." Gubbins, the British Revenue Chief of Oudh, pleaded: "We cannot contemplate the permanent maintenance of a system by which the better classes of natives of Hindustan would remain alienated from us."[103] The process began during the uprising itself when Gubbins confessed: "We are bribing them with jagirs at the moment."[104] As the price of their betrayal two-thirds of the talukdars of Oudh got back their lands on terms more favourable than before under the plea "let bygones be bygones," while we have seen with what ruthlessness the insurgent peasantry was dealt with. Pampering the landlords and handing over the peasantry to their tender mercies—became settled government policy after 1857.

The peasantry duly noted the new phenomenon but it had to undergo the experience of nationwide famines and a series of agrarian riots before it won some tenancy rights. As the British policy had destroyed the old village community so the new bitter experience destroyed the old tradition of village solidarity, with the landlords as its natural leaders. Class struggle entered the countryside; when the modern national movement made a bid for peasant support, the Indian peasantry rallied behind it to fight the landlords as their present exploiters, the betrayers of 1857 and the props of British rule in the countryside.

The Army was reorganised after the sepoy mutiny, which had set the country aflame. The proportion of British troops was increased and they were primarily used as an "army of occupation" to maintain internal security while the Indian troops were organised and trained for service

abroad to subjugate Asian and African territories for British imperialism. The artillery was taken away from the Indian hands. All higher appointments were reserved for the British, an Indian could not even get the King's Commission nor get employment in the Army headquarters except as a clerk in non-military work. The Indian regiments were reorganised on the principle of divide and rule and recruitment confined to the so-called martial races.

But in the long run nothing availed the British. The memory of the sepoys' role during 1857 never died not only in the memory of the Indian people but also of the Indian armed forces. As the modern national movement grew, it could not leave the Indian army, however "reorganised," untouched. During the 1930 national struggle, the Garhwali soldiers refused to fire at the Indian demonstrators at Peshawar. During the post-war national upsurge after a series of "mutinies" in the Indian Army and Air Force, the Royal Indian Navy revolted on February 18, 1946 and the next day the British Prime Minister announced the despatch of the Cabinet Mission to India and negotiations for the independence of India began.

The Indian administrative machine was reorganised as a colossal bureaucratic machine with Indians employed only in subordinate positions, all real power and responsibility resting in British hands. The Queen's Proclamation had promised that there would be no racial discrimination against the Indians in employment in government services. Reality, however, was different.

"In the first quarter of a century after the assumption of direct Government of India by the Crown (1857) there were hardly any Indians in the Civil Service. Though from the end of the century a number of Indians continued annually to secure admission to this service, their proportion was not considerable till after 1919, i e , during the whole period of imperial supremacy.... Rank racialism permeated all the services and constituted the distinguishing characteristic of British rule in the East in the nineteenth cen-

tury ... In the Civil Service though Indians could enter by open competitive examination, no appointments above a certain rank were open to them and the most distinguished Indian administrator of his day, R. C. Dutt, had to resign because, on the ground of his race, he was not promoted to the post of a Commissioner.

"The emergence of India under the British as a powerful state, was the work of a bureaucracy carefully recruited, elaborately organised and maintained with dignity and prestige. The British bureaucracy in India was not only an officialdom It was a governing corporation holding all but four or five of the most important posts in India. They had the preponderant share in the making of government policies and constituted the sole machinery of putting those policies into practice."[105]

After 1857, politically, even Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had suggested that Indians should be included in the legislative council to keep the government in touch with the people. In 1861 the Indian Councils Act provided for the inclusion for legislative purposes of non-official members. In 1862, three Indians were so nominated. These legislatures in which real power remained with the exclusive British Executive were used by patriotic Indian statesmen as tribunes of the Indian people and to unmask British policies and thus aid the growth of the national movement. The British tactic of divide and rule, however, succeeded in another way. The institution of separate electorates for the Muslims was the first expression of the poisonous two-nation theory which ultimately resulted in the partition of the country at the very time of gaining independence.

The British government which claimed credit for early social reform measures like banning of *sati*, widow remarriage, etc., after the experience of 1857 and its subsequent alliance with the Indian feudal reaction became the opponent of all progressive social measures. "Hindu law was largely custom and as customs change, the law also was applied in a different way. Indeed there was no provision

of Hindu Law which could not be changed by customs. The British replaced this elastic customary law by judicial decisions based on the old texts and these decisions became precedents which had to be rigidly followed.... Change could only come by positive legislation but the British Government, which was the legislating authority had no wish to antagonise the conservative elements on whose support it counted. When later some legislative powers were given to the partially elected assemblies, every attempt to promote social reform legislation was frowned upon by the authorities and sternly discouraged."[196] The British government thus became the defender of social reaction in India, after 1857.'

The British overlords had created an English educated Indian middle-class to get cheap and efficient and denationalised Indian cadres for the lower essential rungs of their administration. "Educated natives took no part in the sepoy mutiny; despite the charges to the contrary, they heartily disapproved of the revolt and showed themselves faithful and loyal to the British authorities throughout the course of that crisis."[197]

The above is not wholly true. Dr. Sen states: "Even this small minority (of modern educated Indians) were not unanimous in the support of the Government. An educated Hindu of Bengal complained of 'a hundred years of unmitigated active tyranny unrelieved by any trait of generosity.'" "A century and more of intercourse between each other." he adds. "has not made the Hindu and the Englishman friends or even peaceful fellow subjects."[198]

Calcutta was the biggest centre of these modern educated Indians. They were at the time themselves concentrating upon the struggle against Hindu orthodoxy and the religious terms in which the cause of the insurgents was clothed repelled them. Because of their historic origin and the limitations of their political experience they wrongly identified progress with British rule. They were not, however, "faithful and loyal" in the sense Earl Granville ima-

gined them to be, servile to the British rulers. This was proved in the very next year after the 1857-58 uprising was suppressed when the Bengali intelligentsia stirred the whole of Bengal in solidarity with the Indigo Revolt, with the peasants of Bengal and Bihar who were victims of unimaginable oppression and exploitation of the British planters. Again it was Surendranath Banerji who took the initiative to run an all-India campaign against lowering the age for the ICS, which patently went against the Indian candidates. Then came the campaigns regarding the Ilbert Bill and racial discrimination in courts and the Vernacular Press Act and so on As the new intelligentsia saw more and more of India under the British Crown all their illusions about Queen Victoria's 1858 Proclamation being the Magna Carta of Indian liberties gradually evaporated and they began to agitate for political reforms. In 1882 the Grand Old Man of Indian nationalism, Dababhai Naoroji wrote:

"Hindus, Mohammedans and Parsees alike are asking whether the British rule is to be a blessing or a curse... This is no longer a secret, or a state of things not quite open to those of our rulers who would see "[196]

Step by step the Indian intelligentsia learnt from bitter experience that the British ideals of human equality and political democracy were not meant to be practised in India.

Rabindranath Tagore in his own person linked the early generation of the Indian intelligentsia with the modern and symbolised the transition in the ideological positions occupied by the intelligentsia then and later. In a remarkably sincere and moving address which he gave on his eightieth birthday (May 1941) he stated

"As I look back on the vast stretch of years that lie behind me and see in clear perspective the history of my early development, I am struck by the change that has taken place both in my own attitude and in the psychology of my countrymen—a change that carries within it a cause of profound tragedy....

"The educated of those days had recourse to English language and literature. Their days and nights were eloquent with the stately declamations of Burke, with Macaulay's long-rolling sentences, discussions centred upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all upon the large-hearted liberalism of the nineteenth century English politics....

"At the time though tentative attempts were being made to gain our national independence, at heart we had not lost faith in the generosity of the English race. This belief was so firmly rooted in the sentiments of our leaders as to lead them to hope that the victor would of his own grace pave the path of freedom for the vanquished....

"Certainly that spirit of abject dependence upon the charity of our rulers was no matter of pride. What was remarkable, however, was the whole-hearted way in which we gave our recognition to human greatness even when it revealed itself in the foreigner....

"I naturally set the English on the throne of my heart. Thus passed the first chapter of my life. Then came the parting of ways accompanied with a painful feeling of disillusion when I began increasingly to discover how easily those who accepted the highest truths of civilisation disowned them with impunity whenever questions of national self-interest were involved."[300]

Tagore's panoramic sketch reveals how the early illusions of the Indian intelligentsia regarding British rule in India disappeared, how it was led to discover new ideological foundations as the basis of a national faith to realise India's destiny.

In the economic sphere in this period important changes took place in Britain's policy of exploiting India. Marx graphically sketched in the following words.

"The ruling classes of Great Britain have had, till now but an accidental, transitory and exceptional interest in the progress of India. The aristocracy wanted to conquer it, the moneyocracy to plunder it and the millocracy to under-

sell it But now the tables are turned. The millocracy have discovered that the transformation of India into a reproductive country has become of vital importance to them, and that, to that end it is necessary, above all, to gift her with means of irrigation and of internal communication."[201]

The productive powers in India stood paralysed and the British imperialists had to take economic measures by introducing steam, railways and irrigation, etc., into India to enable her to produce and export raw materials in return for the manufactured goods which the British bourgeoisie dumped on the Indian market.

With the growth of the Indian national movement, Indian economists wrote scientific works of great value which demonstrated how Britain's policy was selfish, how it subordinated Indian interests to the British. These works helped to heighten national consciousness but they suffered from a static and schematic approach. Marx had no illusions about Britain's role in India and stated "the whole rule of Britain in India was swinish"[202] but he had the scientific vision to characterise England as the "unconscious tool of history,'[203] and forecast that all it did to set in motion the productive apparatus of India would ultimately seal its own doom.

He foresaw, "When once you have introduced machinery into locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coal, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. The railway system will, therefore, become in India the forerunner of modern industry This is the more certain as the Hindus are allowed by the British authorities themselves to possess particular aptitude for accommodating themselves to entirely new labour, and acquiring the requisite knowledge of machinery... Modern industry, resulting from the railway system will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labour, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and power."[204]

This very process led to the birth and growth of modern Indian industries despite British opposition; and from the

ranks of the comprador Indian bourgeoisie emerged the Indian industrial bourgeoisie, and from the pauperised peasantry the revolutionary proletariat—the two modern classes in Indian society which gave a new democratic character to the Indian national movement, helped it achieve victory, and are destined to end colonial backwardness left by British imperialism through the industrialisation of our country.

The British created the educated Indian middle-class for their own ends and sneered at it as the Babu class. That very class, however, became the revolutionary progressive intelligentsia of India and played a leading role in the national movement. Marx foresaw that "a fresh class is springing up endowed with the requirements for Government and imbued with European science."

The political and economic centralisation of India achieved by the British for the better exploitation and control of India led inevitably to the growth of an all-India anti-British national consciousness and the birth of an all-India liberation movement. Marx had characterised "the political unity of India" as the first condition of its regeneration.

"Steam," in the words of Marx, "has brought India into regular and rapid communication with Europe, has connected its chief ports with those of the South-Eastern Ocean, and has revindicated it from the isolated position which was the prime law of its stagnation.'

Britain's role in India, in this period, was summed up by Marx in these words:

"All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of productive power, but of their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress

without dragging individuals and people through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation?"[205]

Marx's conclusions are stated in these prophetic and sympathetic words:

"The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the new ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the British yoke altogether. At all events, we may safely expect to see at a more or less remote period, the regeneration of that great and interesting country, whose gentle natives are,... even in the most inferior classes, *'plus fins et plus adroits que les Italiens,'* whose submission even is counterbalanced by certain calm nobility, who, notwithstanding their natural langour, have astonished the British officers by their bravery, whose country has been the source of our languages, our religions, and who represent the type of the ancient German in the Jat, and the type of the ancient Greek in the Brahmin."

India was not only in itself the most prized possession of Britain, but was also very important since it enabled Britain to conquer other countries and extend the empire. K. M. Panikkar states: "Undoubtedly it was the India-based strength, as a great Asiatic power, that enabled to force open the gates of China ,and help to convert the rest of Asia into a European dependency. It is the military conquest of India which, though completed only in 1858, had given the British an unshakable foundation by 1818 that enabled the industrially revolutionised Britain in the post-Napoleonic period to project her political and economic power into the Pacific."[206]

Even before 1857, "From India a policy of imperial expansion was planned and the British Government of India was set on the perilous road of conquest and annexation in the East for the benefit of Britain, but of course at the cost of the Indian tax-payer."[207] Thus Malacca and

Singapore were occupied, Burma conquered, Nepal and Afghan wars conducted and the Persian war managed.

The age of Empire, based on India began after 1857. India now became in fact no less than in name a British possession. The Indian Empire was at this time a "continental order, a political structure based on India, and extending its authority from Aden to Hongkong."[208] In this period, Afghanistan and Persia were made virtual British protectorates, expeditions and missions were sent to Sinkiang and Tibet in the North and the British position in South East Asia and China consolidated.

"The continental system involved a subordinate participation of India"[209] as policemen, traders and usurers, and coolies in the plantations of Britain's growing colonies. Indian resources and man-power were thus used not only to conquer but maintain and run Britain's colonial Empire.

This, however, was only one side of the picture. As part of winning foreign support for the Indian uprising Azimullah Khan, Nana's representative, is reported to have built contacts with Russia and Turkey. Rango Bapuji, the Satara representative, is also reported to have worked with Azimullah. Bahadur Shah's court claimed Persian support. All this was on the old principle that Britain's enemies are our friends. But Britain was the colossus of that period, and the feudal ruling circles of these countries could never be in any hurry to come to the aid of the Indian revolt. They could at best exploit it and await its outcome.

This was, however, not the attitude of democratic circles in these and other countries. As the papers published in the international section of this volume disclose, there was in all democratic circles of the civilised world great sympathy for the Indian uprising. Great and historic is the significance of the Chartist leaders' solidarity with the Indian national uprising. Modern British labour movement dates its birth from the Chartists. Modern Indian national movement dates its birth from the 1857 uprising. What a new fraternal vision emerges from the memory that

the British proletariat and the Indian people have stood together ever since the beginning of their respective movements. The Chinese date the birth of their modern anti-imperialist national movement from the Taiping uprising as we date ours from the 1857 uprising. The Chinese paper documents the hitherto unknown story that the Chinese people responded sympathetically to the 1857 uprising and the Indian sepoys deserted to the Taipings and fought shoulder to shoulder with them against the common enemy. Marx noted the new phenomenon that "the revolt in the Anglo-Indian army has coincided with a general disaffection exhibited against supremacy by the Great Asiatic nations, the revolt of the Bengal Army being, beyond doubt, intimately connected with the Persian and Chinese wars."[210]

Thus the great national uprising of 1857 laid the foundation for the world-wide democratic solidarity with the Indian struggle in its next phase and our new national movement built itself on healthy internationalist traditions. For example, in the twenties, the Indian national movement vigorously opposed the imperialist policies in the Middle East and expressed solidarity with the Egyptian struggle under Zaglul Pasha, in the thirties it expressed practical solidarity with the Chinese people's struggle against the Japanese invaders and the world-wide anti-fascist movement and so on. It was thus no accident that after the achievement of independence India emerged as a great world power championing the cause of world peace and the liberation of all subject nations.

We have analysed above the lessons drawn by the British imperialists from the 1857 uprising for the preservation and consolidation of what became their Indian Empire as also the lessons, however, painfully and laboriously learnt by the Indians to build up a new national liberation movement. Both sides based themselves on their experience of 1857.

J. R. Seeley in the *Expansion of England* wrote in 1883: "The moment a mutiny is but threatened which shall be no

mere mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality, at that moment all hope is at an end, as all desire ought to be an end, of preserving our Empire."[11] Such a day did dawn but it took ninety long years for our post-1857 national movement to grow, mature and acquire strength to make the Firinghi quit India.

However, during the intervening years the memory of 1857 inspired the Indians as it plagued the British. Keir Hardie, describing his experiences in India during 1907, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of 1857 uprising, notes in what jitters the British administrators were."[12] Edward Thompson writing in 1925 stated "Right at the back of the mind of many an Indian the Mutiny flits as he talks with an Englishman—an unavenged and unappeased ghost."[13] By winning Indian independence we have appeased the ghosts of our insurgent ancestors of 1857, have taken our destiny in our own hands and also begun discharging our debt of gratitude to the nations who helped us in our struggle for liberation.

NOTES

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PART TWO

1857 And Hindi Literature

P. C. GUPTA

THE YEAR 1857 lives in popular memory in India as the year in which the might of the British rule was seriously challenged and shaken. These memories have inspired numerous subsequent struggles for national liberation. In particular all attempts at armed revolt in later years have drawn rich moral sustenance from the tradition of 1857. The great leaders of the revolt, particularly Rani Laxmi Bai and Kunwar Singh, have taken a cherished place in the consciousness of India as national heroes and have become the theme of numerous poems, folk songs and other literary works.

Direct references to the revolt are few and far between in Hindi literature but references to the economic plunder and exploitation are many. One becomes aware of a constant feeling of humiliation and misery seeping through the writings of our poets and writers. Like a refrain, running through all modern Hindi literature, is the feeling of sorrow that this great land has been humbled and laid waste by the foreigner.

Hindi poetry during the latter part of the Moghul rule had been preoccupied with erotic themes and stereotyped patterns of verse. After the British occupation of the country it begins to acquire a new social awareness. Pandit Yagya Dutt Tiwari, a poet of this period, laments that the country devotes itself to licentiousness and luxury.

They have no eyes for the sorrows of India, sunk in luxury,
Where is the valour of Vikrama; there is nothing left of Bhoja;
The whole capital is immersed in licentiousness; where is
the brilliance of Kanauj? [1] *

Another poet, Makrandlanchhan, expresses similar sentiments:

India is unhappy, for thousands of years she has suffered,
We should think how to overcome these sorrows;
They are indifferent, thinking why waste time on this;
Whatever may happen, we think of Radha and Kadam.[2]

Sri Vrindavan Lal Varma, the famous Hindi novelist, has in his possession a poem by "Hridayesh" who was a contemporary of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi. "Hridayesh" also deplores the sad decline of values. He writes:

In this *Kaliyuga* many a great one is dust,
But voluptuaries wear pearls on their necks;
"Hridayesh" says that scholars wear skins of deer,
But those who sing and dance wear costly shawls.[3]

Sri Bhagwan Singh Mahaur, well known revolutionary leader of Jhansi who figured in the Bhusawal conspiracy case, has in his possession fragmentary poems by Ganga Prasad and "Chatresh" and a mutilated copy of a Raso by poet Bhaggi Dau Ji "Shyam." Another Raso on the Rani of Jhansi, well known in Bundelkhand, was written by poet Kalyan and extant portions of it have been recently published. These poems contain some rare lines of strength and beauty, preserving and developing the traditions of struggle, valour and heroic self-sacrifice against foreign rule.

The awareness of economic misery, poverty and exploitation finds constant expression in the works of leading poets

* This is only a rough rendering of the Hindi original, the source of which is given at the end of this paper. The verses that follow, too, are translated in similar manner and cannot, therefore, do full justice to the spirit of the original.—*P.C.G.*

and writers. Bhartendu writes in his well known play, *Bharat-Durdasha*:

> The sorrows of India are too heart-rending:
> People are blinded by fear, they are poor and destitute,
> Under British rule there is every comfort and good,
> But the wealth of the land is drained away.
> Dearness, disease and death grow apace,
> Every day our sorrows multiply;
> Taxes are an additional affliction,
> Oh, the sorrows of India are overwhelming.[4]

Similarly Pratap Narain Misra mourns that all the wealth of the land is being drained away by the British:

> The British take everything from us,
> We are good only at lectures,
> Without work talk is no good,
> We cannot ward off trouble by spells.[5]

Bhartendu explains how all trade and crafts have been destroyed and the people impoverished:

> By their machines they plunder us,
> Wealth declines every day and sorrows multiply
> We cannot do without thin cotton and muslins
> We are slaves of foreign weavers.
> Every little trifle is imported from abroad,
> Every day they are loaded in ships and brought here....[6]

There are numerous references to recurring famines in the literature of this period. Badri Narain Chaudhri "Premghan" writes.

> Run, O run, there is a terrible famine,
> Black clouds of ruin gather over India,
> All trade and commerce have disappeared from here,
> Enterprises and industry are all gone
> Agriculture too now lies all waste,
> The fires of *Manhgi* rage all round.[7]

In his only direct reference to the revolt of 1857, Bhartendu speaks of the gripping terror which followed the uprising:

> The fires of the sepoy revolt were put down brutally,
> For terror Indians dared not move their heads.[8]

Pratap Narain Misra and Badri Narain Chaudhri "Prem-ghan" have also made disapproving references to the revolt in their poems. They treat the uprising as the work of disgruntled elements. Pratap Narain Misra writes:

> When in fifty-seven a part of the army revolted,
> The people were firmly on the side of the sovereign.[9]

"Prem-ghan" too writes in similar vein:

> The East was in fear, men were terror-stricken;
> Those who thought that religion and caste were in danger,
> Took with them a few foolish soldiers and some evil men,
> And caused great havoc, sowing seeds of their own ruin....[10]

Many poets in the latter half of the nineteenth century were still writing under feudal patronage. It was, therefore, natural that their attitude towards the revolt came to be guided by the side on which their patrons happened to be. Thus, Sevak, in his *Vag-Vilasa* eulogises the services rendered by his patrons to the British during the revolt:

> Graced by all qualities, giver of great gifts,
> Loyal to the British, handsome and gay,
> He rendered the rulers immense help during the revolt.[11]

Another poet, "Rasraja" Bihari Singh, however, speaks of the oppression of the people under Company rule which ultimately exhausted their patience and led them to rise in revolt.

> It's known to the whole world how during the storm of fifty-seven
> Injustices were done; the people were terrorised.[12]

When we come to lesser known or unknown poets, we find a more generous appreciation of those who stood up against foreign rule and the brazen loot and plunder which accompanied it. In folk songs we find such leaders of the revolt as Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi and Babu Kunwar Singh of Bihar exalted and honoured. They enable us to realise that the common people viewed with great disgust and hostility the shameless greed and exploitation of the land which characterised the rule of the East India Company. These anonymous poets idolised the leaders of the uprising,

men who fought with such astounding courage and heroism against an enemy superior in armed might and organisation.

It is this tradition of the revolt of 1857 which the people have nursed through a whole century—the tradition of heroic self-sacrifice and invincible patriotism. It has inspired subsequent armed revolts such as those of Chittagong and the naval revolt of recent years which hastened the departure of the British from India.

This tradition has been nursed by our writers and poets in their dedication to the service of the people, their close association with popular causes This tradition lives through the works of the poets and writers of the Bhartendu age, the Dwivedi yuga and Chhavavada; it is preserved in the works of Prem Chand, the progressives and the new generation of writers ever growing stronger. We hear echoes of 1857 in works like *Bharat-Bharati*, the patriotic verse of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and "Navin," in the poetry of "Prasad," "Nirala" and Pant; in the novels of Prem Chand, Rahula, Yashpal, Rangeya Raghava, Nagarjuna and Renu, in the stirring work on the Rani of Jhansi by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and Vrindavan Lal Varma; in the poetry of Naraindra, Kedar, "Suman" and numerous folk poets of today.

Modern Hindi writers constantly speak of the national humiliation of India in their works. Though not over-refined in form, *Bharat-Bharati* of Sri Maithili Sharan Gupta contains verses which find a ready response in every patriotic heart. Like the poets of the days of the revolt, Sri Maithili Sharan Gupta grieves over the poverty and famines rampant in the land. He writes:

> Where there was wealth, plenty and purpose in life,
> Who was famed throughout the world as 'golden India'!
> There destitution now dances its awful number
> The only livelihood now is that of a servant.
> Whichever way we look, there is sadness,
> The black night of despair advances on all sides;
> The flames of worry constantly blaze and blast us,
> Every day there is some fresh calamity here [13]

Sumitranandan Pant expresses similar sentiments in his famous poem, *Parivartana*:

> Today Spring breathes desolate sighs
> As though it were winter;
> The twig which had bent down
> Heavy with blossom in spring;
> Today in its helplessness cries;
> 'Youth is a terrible burden!'[14]

In his poem, *Bharat-Mata*, Pant draws a heart-rending picture of poverty-stricken India:

> Mother India
> Lives in villages;
> Her dusty, soiled scarf
> Is spread out dark in the fields,
> Her tears flow in the currents of Ganga and Yamuna,
>
> She is like an idol of clay
> Sad and unhappy . . .[15]

Memories of the revolt are deeply embedded in the Indian consciousness. They arouse deep hatred for foreign rule and fire anew the emotion of patriotism. Those who took to arms to overthrow British rule—men like Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Surya Sen—as well as those who believed in mass resistance to oust the foreigner, alike shared the feeling of love and admiration for the heroes of the 1857 revolt. This tradition of defiance and resistance to foreign rule is a most valued heritage of Hindi literature. It runs as an undercurrent through all Chhayavadi poetry, finds strong expression in the radical works of Prem Chand, inspired such novels as *Dada Comrade* and *Deshorohi* by Yashpal, *Balchanma* and *Varun Ke Bete* by Nagarjuna and *Maila Anchal* by Renu. It inspired the scholarly writings of Rahula Sankritayana, Bhagwat Sharan Upadhyaya and Rangeya Raghav. We hear echoes of it in such poems as *Lal Nishan* by Naraindra, *Nai Ag Hai* by "Suman," *Yuga Ki Ganga* by Kedar and *Navik-Vidroha* by Rajeeva Saxena. Memories of this national resistance are

evoked by such stories as *Teen Gunde* by Kishen Chandra or his sketches *Subaha Hoti Hai.*

With the consciousness of the people reaching a higher political level, the 1857 revolt will inspire more and more writers to celebrate this great national event in song and story. Such attempts have already been made under the inspiration of a new national awareness. Khwaja Hasan Nizami has drawn sad and moving portraits of beggared Moghul princes in his book, *Mughalom Ke Antim Din.* Among the leaders of the revolt, the figure of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi has evoked particular love and veneration. Subhadra Kumari Chauhan has voiced the popular emotion roused by this great woman in a ballad which carries many familiar echoes of folk poetry. The poem begins as follows:

> Princely generations were in revolt; thrones trembled:
> Old India was filled again with the bloom of youth.
> People realised afresh the value of their lost freedom:
> Everyone was determined to oust the Firinghi
>
> The old sword flashed once more
> In fifty-seven,
> This the story we have heard
> From the Bundelas who worship Shiva.
> The Rani of Jhansi fought
> Valorously and well.[16]

The immense popularity of this poem among Hindi-speaking people owes much to the fact that it is in tune with the mass sentiment. The feelings that the revolt generated are described by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan in vivid stanzas:

> In huts there was misery, in palaces injured pride;
> In the hearts of brave soldiers there was pride of the past;
> Nana was collecting all material for battle,
> His sister, Laxmi Bai, openly hailed the goddess of War!
> The sacrificial fires were lighted,
> They had to recover their ancient glory;
> This is the story we have heard
> From the Bundelas who worship Shiva!
> The palace provided the spark, the huts fanned it alive:

> This was the flame of liberty hidden in the hearts of all;
> The fires spread to Jhansi, to Delhi and Lucknow;
> Meerut, Kanpur and Patna—all were afire.[17]

Principal Manoranjan Prasad similarly wrote a poem on Babu Kunwar Singh in *Yuvak* (1929), when it was being published from Patna under the editorship of Sri Benipuri. The poem was immediately banned by the British government. This poem and other on the Rani of Jhansi written by Manoranjan Babu are very popular for their great power and passion. The poem on Kunwar Singh begins:

> The song of joy was lifted; it was the song of freedom;
> In every corner of the country the same song was heard
> At one end were Laxmi Bai and Peshwa Nana:
> At the other was brave Kunwar Singh of Bihar.
> In his old bones of eighty the old fires were ablaze;
> Everyone says, Kunwar Singh was a great hero.

The outstanding novelist of Hindi, Sri Vrindavan Lal Varma, has written a novel entitled *Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi* In the preface to the novel he states that the Rani of Jhansi uses the word "Swaraj" in a letter which she wrote to Raja Mardan Singh of Banpur requesting him for help in the struggle against the British The novel is a stirring account of the high idealism of Rani Laxmi Bai and the love and veneration in which the people held her. She emancipated the women of Jhansi and made them fight shoulder to shoulder with their men-folk. In the novel she is represented as saying to Nana Sahib:

"The people are the real strength. I am convinced that this strength is endless ... It was on the strength of the people that Chhatrapati challenged the powerful emperor of Delhi. not on the strength of nobles. The Mawlas and Kunbhies were peasants and still are. Their ploughs embody the desire for freedom and independence. I consider the people here to be the same...."[18]

Sri Vrindavan Lal Varma sums up his evaluation of the Rani in the following words "The Rani fought for

Swarajya, died for Swarajya and turned herself into a stone for the foundation of Swarajya."[19]

These are not sentiments superimposed today on buried memories. In 1857 itself the people viewed British rule with feelings of intense dislike and hatred. In a "Diary" of the revolt, edited by Sir John Metcalfe, Nawab Muinud-din Hasan Khan says:

"I wish to begin my account of the origin of the revolt with the statement that the British might think whatever they like about themselves, Indians considered them to be oppressors; and this feeling was further fanned by the incident of the incorporation of Oudh in the British empire. This incident spread discontent among the soldiers first of all, most of whom came from this region. Then came the various events connected with the revolt. The peasants were weighed down under the terrible troubles. Many Indian States were ruined and fell. Many dynasties and huge cities were humbled into dust.... Many innocent people were hanged and clouds of universal destruction swept over the country."[20]

This rich tradition of hatred for the rule of the foreigner found constant expression in folk songs. A Bhojpuri folk-songs says that the frail bark of the foreigner now trembles helplessly in the angry waves:

> The bark of the foreigner is now reeling.
> The country is sunk in poverty;
> In midstream his bark reels.
> Famine and disease increase in the land.
> The clouds of trouble rumble;
> In the river of sorrow there are fathomless waters,
> The winds of tyranny blow fiercely across the land.
> The ruler-pilot is drunken-mad.
> We appeal to him, but he says not a word.
> O foreigner, your boat is doomed;
> Your funeral procession begins on the river![21]

The scarcity and famine conditions, a classical feature of British rule in India, make the poet forget both poetry and love:

Because of scarcity we have forgotten
All our songs—Birha, Kajri and Kabir;
The sight of beauty now
Arouses no echo in the heart![22]

In a Malwi folk song the poet says:

The country is now in trouble;
The Firingi rules the land,
Black clouds have risen in the skies.[23]

Bhagat Singh, inspired by the armed revolt against the foreigner, became the hero of numerous folk songs. These songs keep alive the tradition of anti-imperialist resistance offered by our people through various struggles. A folk song on Bhagat Singh begins with a line like this:

He swung on the noose, the brave Bhagat Singh,
The proud Bhagat Singh![24]

Another folk song depicts a patriot as fretting against the delay in executing him:

Every moment's delay now tortures me.
Why do you shrink, with the rope round my neck?
I shall fly like a hero straight to heaven.
And tell Dharmaraj my sorrows;
I shall win back Bhagat Singh from him.[25]

Such songs keep alive the deep-seated dislike of our people against foreign rule and serve as a gauge by which we may measure the folk-consciousness of our country.

A valuable heritage of the revolt for the Indian national struggle was the tradition of Hindu-Muslim unity built during this period. Under Bahadur Shah and in the armies of the Rani of Jhansi—everywhere Hindu and Muslim stood shoulder to shoulder, united against the common enemy. Muinuddin Hasan Khan emphasises this fact in his *Ghadar-Diary*:

"It is guessed that this was a joint declaration which was the result of unity between Hindu and Moslem mutineers. It can be accepted as a historical fact that the episode of the occupation of Oudh by the Company increased

discontent and it was because of this that the Revolt flared up early. The Oudh episode affected both the Hindus and the Moslems, because in Oudh the number of the Hindus far exceeds that of the Moslems...."[26]

This tradition of national unity was preserved through all subsequent revolts such as those of the naval ratings and the I.N.A.

The so-called "mutiny" was in the popular consciousness of India a mass revolt against foreign rule Hindi literature in the works of known writers and poets, as well as in that of unknown ones, reflects the urges and sentiments of our people which led to such a mass uprising against British rule a hundred years ago.

NOTES

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Urdu Literature And The Revolt

S. EHTESHAM HUSAIN

It is commonly said that Urdu literature is a product of the Darbar (the court), the Khanqah (the shrine of the Sufis) and the Bazaar (the market place). Undoubtedly it is an oversimplification of a complex historical process of integration and disintegration of facts, conditions and ideas stretching over centuries. The triangle represents the influence of the feudal order, the religious-cum-social milieu and the common man's desire to find expression in literature. It is significant that the rise of Urdu poetry in Northern India took place in the latter 18th and early 19th centuries and coincided with the decay of the feudal order. Viewed from this angle the period appears to have lost all vitality, unable to express even the values of the departing age. In an obscure sense this was also the age of a new awakening, the beginning of a new awareness which was inherent in the changing historical, political and social conditions. Urdu poetry then had the anguish, the confusion, the pathos, the uncertainty of the age and it would be futile to search for ideas and ideals other than these. The atmosphere in which these poets lived, the taste of the patrons for whom they wrote and in most cases, the absence of any common link between the poets and the people—all these contributed to the degeneration of poetry, often into mere word-play. It had to be highly standardized in form, limited in thought and mechanically subservient to traditions.

It was only with the advent of the East India Company

rule that the poets and writers began to realize the gravity of the new situation. When Sirajuddaula was killed by the British, his friend and collaborator, Raja Ram Narain "Maozoon" cried in anguish:

> Oh! where have gone the mad lovers who roamed
> about in the desert,
> And where have vanished those days of love?

And "Mus'hafi" wrote:

> All the wealth and splendour that India had
> The infidel Englishmen have squeezed out by treachery.

Then came the revolt, the big flare-up of the vague, undefined, unorganized yet intense national sentiment. Most of the big and small Darbars that patronized the poets had tumbled down. Oudh, the great centre of arts and culture, was annexed by the British in 1856. The Moghul rule at Delhi had been reduced to a mere symbol. A new Empire that had no roots in Indian soil and alien to Indian culture came into being. It may not be very fruitful to look for literary productions of high quality dealing directly with the revolt or its consequences, though such literature is also to be found. Rather it would be more useful to treat literature also as the product of certain historical and economic forces that motivated the revolt itself. A great part of the literary output since then reveals a different spirit. Henceforth the poets and writers may also be classified as leaders of thought inasmuch as they visualised literature as a formative process in the development of the nation. For them literature must play a role in awakening of the people to new consciousness. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Khwaja Altaf Husain "Hali," Maulana Mohammad Husain "Azad," Dr. Nazir Ahmad, Maulana Shibli Maulana Zakaullah, Chiragh Ali, Mohsinual Mulk and Viqarul Mulk, to name only the most important ones, all believed in bringing literature in line with life and making it serve life This could not have been possible in a conscious way earlier.

While we talk of the impact of the revolt on Urdu lite-

rature, we should be careful to note that the nature of the great revolt was not clearly comprehended at the time. In most cases it was treated as a "scourge of God," the foul play of fate, the evil-eye of the sky, the mere change of times and "the result of our misdeeds." These subjective interpretations of an historical event of such importance drove them into wrong directions and consequently no attempt was made to analyse its extent and nature. Not only this. It was interpreted in certain quarters, evidently under British influence, as a revolt against established authority. This idea gained such firm ground that it took a long time to link the traditions of the revolt with the national movement. An objective assessment may yet take some time as new materials become available and more facts are brought to light.

We shall take first the works written during the revolt. Out of the many works the important ones are: *Khutoot-i-Ghalib* (the letters of Ghalib), *Dastambo* (The Persian Diary of Ghalib written during the revolt), *Dastan-i-Ghadar* (The story of the Mutiny) by Zaheer Dehlavi, *Tarikh-i-Sarkashi-i-Bijnor* (The History of the Rebellion at Bijnor) by Sir Syed Ahmad, *Risala-i-Asbah-i-Baghwat-i-Hind* (A Treatise on the Causes of the Indian Revolt) by Sir Syed Ahmad, *Tarikh-i-Hind*, vol. IX (History of India), by Zakaullah, *Roznamcha-i-Ghadr* (The Diary of the Mutiny) written by an Englishman and translated by Dr. Nazir Ahmad, *Agha Hajju "Sharafs,"* a long poem on the sack of Lucknow, many poems of Wajid Ali Shah, Munir Shikohabadi, Bahadur Shah "Zafar" and Barq Lacknawi and *Fughan-i-Delhi* (The Lament of Delhi), a collection of some fifty poems first published in 1861 and various poems and articles written mostly in Delhi newspapers during and following the upheaval. There may still be others but we may skip them over as we do not propose to give in this article a catalogue of such books.

Analysing some of the above writings we come to certain very remarkable conclusions. Mirza Asadullah Khan

"Ghalib," the renowned Urdu poet has been accepted as the most representative poet of the culture and tradition of the period. Being of the same stock as others of the dying Moghul court, he had developed relations with the Britishers and had even admired certain of their qualities and achievements. He was the first writer of significance who found British achievements in science and political organization more progressive in some respects than those achieved even by the great Moghul, Akbar, and this he mentioned in one of his Persian poems meant to be a foreword to a new edition of Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*, prepared by Sir Syed, sometime in 1855. It was such a scathing criticism of the old order that even Sir Syed could not agree to append it to his work. Ghalib, who was then attached to the court of Bahadur Shah maintained close relations with all dignitaries at Delhi and when the revolt spread he was inevitably embroiled in it. After the British occupied Delhi his house was guarded by the armies of the Maharaja of Patiala (being the house of one of his respected friends) which saved it from the loot and arson indulged in by the victorious British. Besides other literary engagements Ghalib was then working on a Diary in Persian which, though a good literary piece, does not contain much of historical value In the scores of letters that he wrote to different types of people all over India, there is much information about conditions in Delhi. He speaks of the "terror" of the "Blacks" and the "Whites," of the death of his English and Indian friends and patrons, of the turning of Delhi into a military camp where no one could move about without something like a curfew pass, of the trial of many innocent aristocrats of Delhi and the difficulties of everyday life. He does not attach any political significance to these events but he knows that the old days were not to come back. It may be interesting to read a few lines from one of his Ghazals which mentions the event directly:

> As every militaryman of England today can do what he wills,
> Men are mortally afraid

To come out into the market place
The *Chowk* has become a place for murder
And the home is nothing but a prison.

Ghalib is very critical of the behaviour of the British towards Delhi people in general and Muslims in particular, after the suppression of the revolt. Of his friends, Sheikh Imam Baksh "Sabhai," a great scholar and poet, was shot along with two of his sons. Maulana Fazle Haq, the distinguished scholar was sent to the Andamans where he wrote a book in Arabic on the great revolt entitled *As-Sauratul-Hindis* (The Indian Revolution); Nawab Mustafa Khan "Shefta" was sent to jail; Maulana Mohammad Baqar, a great Shia Divine, the founder of the first important literary newspaper in Urdu and the father of Mohammed Husain "Azad" was shot dead and Ghalib was a witness to all this. His Ghazals forcefully express the sorrow and agony born of these fateful days. Much of these facts has been preserved in books like *Ghalib Ka Roznamcha* (The Diary of Ghalib), *Angreson ki Bipta* (The sufferings of the Englishmen), *Bahadur Shah ka Muqaddama* (The trial of Bahadur Shah), all written by Khwaja Hasan Nizami; *Delhi ki Akhri Bahar* and *Naubat-i-Panjroze* (The Transitory Joy) by Rashidul Khairi; *Bahadur Shah Zafar* by Amir Ahmed Alavi and *Bahadur Shah Zafar aur Unka Ahd* by Rais Ahmad Jafri.

"Munir" Shikohabadi was a famous poet of the Lucknow school, attached to the Nawab of Farrukhabad. He was arrested, summarily tried and sent to the Andamans. He has written various poems dealing with his personal affliction as well as the national catastrophe.

Mohammed Husain "Azad" composed a poem on the "Victory of Armies of the East" over the Britishers It was published in his father's *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* of May 24, 1857, and has only recently been discovered.

Earlier I have mentioned books that were the result of personal experience of their authors or an evolution of the situation arising out of the revolt. Sir Syed Ahmad

(who had not received the knighthood then) wrote a history of the rebellion at Bijnor. He had not till then assumed the leadership of the Muslim intelligentsia. His political career begins with the publication of the book, entitled *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, written in Urdu, and subsequently translated into English. This book provides a searching analysis of the events. He places the blame on the British whose policy had denied them the good will of the population. "It was for the government to try and win the friendship of its subjects, not the subjects to try and win that of the government." He added, "Now the English government has been in existence upward a century, and up to the present hour it has not secured the affection of the people." It is a very controversial political document, as has been the role of Sir Syed himself, but nevertheless, it must be stated that no student of our history can ignore it.

Zaheer Dehlavi was a young but eminent poet attached to the court of Bahadur Shah. After a lapse of some years he wrote his autobiography and named it *Dastan-i-Ghadr* (The Story of the Mutiny). He gives a detailed account of the happenings in Delhi, his sufferings and the woes of those who were suspected of being collaborators or sympathisers of the rebels.

There is yet another book, an anthology of poems, entitled *Fughan-i-Dehli* (The Lament of Delhi) published in 1861, which deserves mention as it contains the poems of some forty poets on the ruin and plunder of Delhi. They mostly deal with the sufferings of the noble and the cultured people of Delhi who had to face hardships never experienced before. They describe the events very vaguely and indicate that the Muslims have been the chief victims. Several of them point out that not a single able-bodied young man in Delhi escaped the gallows. Some of the poems end on the optimistic note that Delhi will flourish again and the good old days will be back.

This is also the tone of several poems written by Luck-

now poets. They sing of the writers' loyalty to the king and to the city of Lucknow which had been reduced to utter ruin. They are a kind of elegy focusing on trivial matters, rather than lament over the national loss. One cannot, however, be very critical of these poets whose sense of patriotism and national unity was coloured by local loyalties and devotion.

To understand the impact of the revolt on the tradition of Urdu literature, we shall have to analyse the post-revolt developments and the way they influenced men's minds. Just after the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown, the proclamation about religious freedom proved to be an indirect invitation to think in terms of religion. It was also a suggestion for the middle and the upper classes to think only of the welfare of their own communities. It was, in other words, a signal for a sort of religious revivalism and the glorification of the past. This may sound strange but we find that the idea of a unified nation suffered a setback after the struggle of 1857. Even our best writers, in almost all the Indian languages, began to look upon the achievements of their forefathers with nostalgia. In certain sense this indeed was a sign of awakening but the narrow religious outlook prevented their writings from becoming part of national literature. Had it been otherwise, we would probably have had much greater works (at least in thought content) from Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Sir Syed, Bhartendu and his friends, Hali and Shibli. The national spirit shrouded in the religious mode of thinking can be discerned if one analyses the literature of the post-1857 period. For a clearer expression of this, however, one shall have to reach for writings of the twentieth century.

Pratap Narain then cried Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan and Sir Syed and Nazir Ahmad spoke of Muslims as a separate nation, although the circumstances clearly indicate that they were either under evil foreign influence or naively misguided.

While reading modern literature we must not close our eyes to the duality that it possessed, a duality that spoke of progress and reaction, of hope and despondency, fear and courage, loyalty to the ruling class and protest against its ways and methods. This signified an important stage in the development of the national consciousness. This newly-gained consciousness had to be expressed in new forms of literature and henceforth we see the development of new literary genres in both prose and poetry. Novel, drama, essay, biography, criticism and long reflective poems came into vogue and in several cases a synthesis with the older forms was achieved. The emergence of the press helped the development and popularisation of the new forms.

If we study the writings of Sir Syed, Azad, Hali, Nazir Ahmad Shibli and Sharar in the light of these observations we shall see that they had awakened to the needs of the people and wanted to infuse them with hope. Hali's motto throughout was: "We must change with the time." The Holy Quran was being read for twelve hundred years but no one had quoted it for prompting Muslims to accept and accelerate the pace of change. Now Hali quoted from the Quran, "God does not change the conditions of a people who do not care to change their own conditions." All these writers had accepted the need for change and wrote about it. They wanted their followers to shake off despair and begin a new life. It is not just a coincidence that Sir Syed, Hali, Azad, Shibli and Sharar all wrote on "Hope" in prose or verse. They brought literature down to earth to serve the people, to spread knowledge, to prepare people to accept the change of the times and to shape their own destiny.

The gradual development of the national consciousness among the Urdu writers is a long story and it is not possible to mention even the names of the writers and their books that were the outcome of the political consciousness released by the revolt. Most of these writers did not stop writing

even during the darkest days of political oppression and they sang in the voice of Brij Mohan Chakbast:

> Let them seal my lips and let them put me into the prison but
> They cannot put fetters on my ideas.

It is not the purpose of this short essay to provide a history of the national movement as reflected in Urdu literature. The author's purpose is only to provide a glimpse into the working of the minds of our writers just after they had been put on the high seas of a turbulent political life. The revolt had released their pent up anger and energy and they have used it for the cause of India's freedom and progress to this day. This is the meaning and significance that Urdu writers have derived from the great revolt.

Ghalib And The Revolt Of 1857

K. M. ASHRAF

I

THE ORTHODOX HISTORIAN may have heard of Ghalib (Mirza Asadullah Khan) as a celeberated Urdu poet but not as a fellow historian who was commissioned by Bahadur Shah to write the official history of the Moghul dynasty. In any case, he is probably unaware of the fact that the great national poet not only chose to live in Delhi under the rule of the rebels but also kept a diary of day to day events of this memorable period in Persian, entitled *Dastambo*. The entries in this diary begin with the arrival of the Meerut Sowars on May 11, 1857, and go up to September 20 when the British troops succeeded in overpowering the resistance of popular forces in Delhi In some respects, this diary covers the developments up to the fall of Lucknow (July 1858).

What actually prompted the author to compose this unique document is not very clear.[1] But in any case, it saw the light of day after the British were in full possession of Delhi and we shall not be very far wrong in assuming that the original was suitably revised to meet the requirements of the situation. As it now stands, the record of events in Ghalib's diary is all too brief and does not mention some important matters which were common knowledge. It is particularly inadequate in its treatment of all significant

developments. It looks as if the author had no leisure to rewrite his diary and confined himself to deleting some passages and interpolating a few afterthoughts—all evidently to save his skin.[2]

The story opens in a mood of exhilaration, with the masses of people in revolt on all sides and armies converging on Delhi to fight the British troops on the Ridge But no sooner the action commences—which lasted four months and ten days—than the author becomes more and more reticent and uncommunicative and after a few lines of a general nature we are abruptly informed that "the Indian forces had no choice but to retreat in face of the British onslaught on the Kashmiri Gate"[3] He now diverts from the main theme and except for a few stray, though revealing, references to the resistance movement in the country, he is mainly concerned with his own domestic problems and with his family services to the British in the earlier period.

This reticence on the part of the author to discuss the details of the uprising, as also his studied professions of loyalty to alien conquerors, could be easily understood and appreciated if we keep in mind the savage massacres that were then going on. The slightest suspicion of his complicity in the rebellion would surely have sent him to the gallows.[4] Besides, Ghalib depended for his living on a pension and before the authorities could be persuaded to restore it, he had to prove his *bona fides*. This was all the more necessary in the case of one who belonged to the aristocracy and had been a tutor, a courtier and a friend to Bahadur Shah, the Moghul king of Delhi,[5] and who, even while admiring the modernizing influence of the British regime in India, could not be reconciled to the aggressive policies of the British, particularly the annexation of Oudh[6] Sometime later when the rigours of martial law relaxed and peaceful conditions prevailed, Ghalib became ever more vocal in his criticism of British high-handedness He refused to share the illusion of the landed gentry that the new rulers would share political power with them[7] He openly

sympathised with the sufferings of his rebel friends and the fallen aristocracy in general.[8]

Be that as it may, the fact remains that when the tide turned against him towards the middle of September 1857, he had to, like many of his friends, put personal safety above everything else. We cannot, therefore, blame the poet for arguing his carefully prepared defence before the authorities concerned. He pleaded that his family had always been loyal to the British and that he had been granted a life pension on that very score; he had kept himself severely aloof both from the royalists and the rebels during the days of the uprising and had, in fact, shut himself in his house; he had chosen to stay in town after the entry of the British troops, when so many among the gentry and the the pensioners had fled.[9] And he submitted his Persian diary to the higher authorities both in India and in England, in support of his alibi. His reasons for this are not far to seek. A master of that peculiar enigmatic style of writing —so dear to the litterateurs of the Moghul court in the 19th century—he could skilfully conceal the meaning even when he professes to reveal it. To add to the obscurity of both the form and the content of his writing, Ghalib exploited on this occasion his well known bias for literary purity in Persian.[10] In a word he took good care to see that his diary was not used either against himself or against those of his friends who had taken a leading part in the uprising.[11]

This, however, should not detract from *Dastambo*'s value as source material and its validity as authority for some of the events connected with the uprising in Delhi. I need not emphasise that the author's love of objective truth and his passion for humanism are as characteristic of this as of all his other writings.[12] For obvious reasons, however, the narration of events in the diary is vague and impersonal. But precisely because he has chosen to omit the dramatic incidents and the role of some individuals, Ghalib has unwittingly succeeded in imparting to us, even in this

fragment, some of the dynamism of this great movement of national resistance and a glimpse of the new social forces that were involved. Whatever the limitations of his treatment in the current version of his Persian diary, it is certainly an invaluable document for every conscientious student of the events of 1857.[13]

We shall now place before the readers a few selected extracts from *Dastambo* and leave them to judge its merits for themselves.

The Masses in Revolt

The poet is somewhat puzzled as the scene opens: "The people fight the rulers; the troopers shed the blood of the (British) commanders and then rejoice over it, unmindful of consequences" (*Kulliyat*, p. 380).

The Partisans of the British are Paralyzed

"Since the rush of the torrent may not be checked by the aid of straw, each one (among the supporters of the British) found himself helpless and sat down in (the solitude of) his home to mourn (at the turn of events). Count me as one of these mourners" (*Ibid.*, p 382).

Welcome to Meerut Sowars on Arrival

"Some of the malicious Sowars... from Meerut entered the city, all of them composed but vociferous and in their eagerness to kill their masters, thirsting for the blood of the English. The watchmen of the city gates.... who had full knowledge of the secret plot (literally 'fellow oathtakers' *ham-sogand*).... welcomed these uninvited or (may be) invited guests;.... (in any case) the Sowars.... found the sentries hospitable...." (*Ibid.*).

The Revolt Spreads

"By and by, news came pouring in from far off cities that hotheads of every regiment in each cantonment have

killed their (British) commanders. And just as the dancing girl is roused to sing by the tune of music, the ungrateful soldiers and workmen in their thousands joined heartily (literally 'their hearts became one'); and, far or near, even without uttering a single word among themselves, they got down to their respective tasks ... These unmanly troops of skilled fighters have a bond of solidarity of their own like a broom. On their march they make a fine display without the usual exercises and fight the battles even without (proper) command" (*Ibid.*).

Feudal Aristocracy Goes into the Background

"They laid into dust both the honour and the mansions (literally 'the dust of their land') of those who were distinguished for wisdom and good name; while those who had neither power nor pelf shot into prominence.... Fancy! these worthless fellows now demand compliance with their orders from the very elements... (It is an evil day when) men of valour are scared of their own shadows and a mere trooper lords over all and sundry (literally 'over the king and the beggar') (*Ibid.*, pp. 384-85).

Popular Armies Gather in Delhi

Ghalib notes how as soon as they arrived in Delhi, the various detachments of troopers first handed over the gold and silver with them to the royal treasury, then went to the Red Fort "to put their foreheads on the threshold of the King" and later moved about with a martial air in the city.

"And, lo! there emerged from every nook and corner a soldier, from every pathway a platoon and from each direction an army and all began to move about on the land.... These are wonderful times and the hour of those who have triumphed. Just now within and without the city of Delhi, there have gathered something like fifty thousand infantry and cavalry" (*Ibid*., p. 385).

Popular Pressure on the Indian Ruling Chiefs

"Tafazzal Husain Khan, the renowned (ruler) of Farrukhabad put (literally 'rubbed') his forehead in the presence of the king even though from afar and thus affirmed his allegiance. Khan Bahadur Khan (of Bareilly) sent to the royal presence an offering of a hundred and one gold coins and an elephant and a horse with silver trappings. . . Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan Bahadur (of Rampur). . . . who for so long had been firm in his attachment to the English rulers, was compelled to send a formal message (of loyalty to Bahadur Shah) and thereby silenced the voice of his (critical) neighbours. In Lucknow . the wise minister (literally "one who knows the job") Shraf-ud Dowlah raised, to the throne a ten-year-old boy from among the sons of Wajid Ali Shah. . . and designated himself (as his) *Peshkar* and adviser. . . . He sent his emissary to the royal court (at Delhi) with handsome presents. . . (In short) the star of good fortune of the king ascended so high that the face of the Britishers (literally 'the *Khaki*-wearers') was concealed from it" (*Ibid.*, pp. 387 88).

The Fight with the British

"Day in and day out shells from both sides fall from the air like common pebbles The heat of May and June together with the glare of the sun is ever on the increase . . . .The warriors of the royal force daily gather from all over (the city) after sunrise, go to fight like lions. . . and return just before sunset" (*Ibid.*, p. 386).

The Mansion of Hakim Ahsanullah is Burnt Down

"They looted the mansion of Hakim Ahsanullah, the supporter of the British (literally 'who was working for the victory of the British') which looked like a Chinese picture gallery and set fire to the antechamber of his reception hall" (*Ibid.*, p. 387).

British Offensive and the Retreat

On September 14, 1857 came the British attack and now "in face of the British onslaught on the Kashmiri Gate, the Indian forces (literally 'the black troops') had no choice but to retreat" (*Ibid.*, p. 388).

People Resist to the Last

When the British captured the city from the hands of the popular army, the common people joined the soldiers and took to street fighting. "Some from among the hoodlums and the rabble of the city now began to engage the stout-hearted occupation troops.... For two or three days every nook and corner of the city from Kashmiri Gate onwards was converted into a regular battle-field and the three outlets—the Ajmeri Darwaza, the Turkman Darwaza and the Delhi Darwaza—remained in the hands of the (rebel) soldiers" (*Ibid.*, 389).

As a result when Delhi was finally occupied "so many ... from among the high and the low, that none could count, escaped from the city through these three gates" (*Ibid.*).

The Morale of People

Speaking of the civilians in his own quarter, Ghalib notes, "though the entrance (to the lane) has been blockaded, there is still such fearlessness (in the atmosphere) that people force open the gates, go out into the open and bring in their supplies" (*Ibid.*)

Resistance in the Countryside and Around Delhi

Finally, when Delhi formally passed into the hands of the British on October 7, 1857, the resistance in the countryside had by no means subsided. "Even now," notes the author, "vast numbers of rebels in Bareilly, Farrukhabad and Lucknow are determined to fight in organised groups and to dispute (the possession of) every acre of the soil (literally 'from Farsang to Farsang') ... ."[14] (In the neigh-

bourhood of Delhi) the Meos of Sohna and Nuh (Gurgaon District) have created uproar in such fashion that you would imagine lunatics had broken loose from their chains. Tula Ram.... is still at large in Rewari and has now joined his forces with those of Devi, the Meo, and operates under him. This group, in those hilly and forest regions, has its own independent plan of fighting the (British) rulers. In a word you might almost say that the very elements in India are in a ferment" (*Ibid.*, p. 397).

A Domestic Scene — Collecting Rain Water

After September 15, all grain shops were shut down and the sweepers, the washermen, the barbers and the hawkers left the city. As a result, for two days and nights there was nothing to eat or to drink. Ghalib was naturally at his wit's end when "suddenly the clouds gathered and it began to rain. We (in our house) spread a sheet of cloth, put a big jar under it, and thus collected rain water. They say, the clouds gather the water from the sea and pour it on the land; but on this occasion, the precious clouds phoenixwise fetched water from the Stream of Life itself. In any case, what Alexander so vainly sought after in the days of his kingship, this (humble) parched-throat, drinker of salt water, discovered it in these hours of misery."[15]

Plunder and Massacre

With the British occupation of the city began the new phase of what the author characterised as "the fire of fury of (our new) masters": "The victors advanced through the passage in front of Kashmiri Gate which leads to the market and killed whomsoever they could find on the road. Not one among the gentry and the sober but barred the entrance to his house" (*Ibid.*, pp. 388-89). Ghalib suddenly noticed that "there were gallows on every side and the roads look fearful.... Now no one dares come out and talk to us, nor do we venture to go out and look around for ourselves"....[16] (*Ibid.*, pp. 391-92).

(As to the plunder and loot of the city) "the general order to the troops is to spare the life of one who immediately surrenders and to take all his belongings; in case, one puts up resistance, they are to take his life together with his goods. In any case, looking at so many corpses (all over the city), one suspects that they have been massacred, since their heads are no more visible on their shoulders" (*Ibid.*, p. 395).[17]

"Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Ballabhgarh, Loharu, Farrukhnagar, Dujana and Pataudi, are the seven states in the neighbourhood of the city whose chiefs are attached to the British Agency at Delhi. Of these, the rulers of five states are detained (for punishment) in the Fort and the remaining two are anxious for their fate. They hanged the rulers of Jhajjar, Ballabhgarh and Farrukhnagar separately on different days" (*Ibid.*, pp. 400-01).

Thereafter Delhi looked like a big prison In the words of our author: "In this city the prison is situated outside the town and the police lockup ('the abode of lamentation') within. They have crowded these two places with so many people that you almost feel one human being was packed into the other. The Angel of Death alone knows the number of those from these two prison houses who have died on the gallows from time to time. The Muslim residents in the city do not now exceed a thousand; they are either relations of the prisoners or otherwise, pension-holders...." (*Ibid.*, pp. 403-04).

The Hour of Despair and a Vision of the Future

Ghalib was naturally heartbroken at the sight of this "City of the Dead" (*Shahr-i khamoshan*) as he called it where "he was once known to thousands, had a companion in every home and a friend in every home and in every establishment." It was painful for him to think that "the city was empty of Muslims. In the darkness of night their homes are without light and by day the chimneys of their walls emit no smoke." In this hour of desolation and

despair the poet saw nothing but death and starvation facing the Muslims as a community (*Ibid.*, p. 410).* Soon, however, somewhere on the horizon a dim vision appeared and the poet concluded on a note of mystic hope:

> The harp player, when he strikes the chord
> One can see what he is after.
> Happiness lies concealed behind the veil of sorrow,
> Not for wrath does the washerman beat the cloth.[15]

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2 *Ghalib-ka-Roznamcha*, (Delhi, 1924)
3 *Makatib-i Ghalib*, (Rampur, 1949).
4 *Nadir khutut-i Ghalib*, (Lucknow, 1939)
5 *Ud-i Hindi*, (Aligarh, 1927).
6 *Urdu-i Mualla*, (Lahore, 1922)

NOTES

1 In one of his Urdu letters, Ghalib observes how, when on May 11, the uprising began in Delhi, he shut himself in his house (which was situated in the heart of the city) and 'since one can't live without some occupation (*shughl*), I started writing my own experiences (*sarguzasht*) and added what I came to learn from others" (*Ud-i Hindi*, p. 14). Similar remarks in his diary (*Kulliyat-i-Nasr i Ghalib*, p. 387).
2 For his fear of prosecution, see *Kulliyat*.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 388
4 It is generally estimated that 27,000 persons were hanged or shot in the city of Delhi alone. Amongst those who were massacred was the family of Sahabai, a famous poet and friend of Ghalib.
5 The author deliberately deletes all references to Bahadur Shah and the royal princes in his diary (*Kulliyat*, p. 398) and heaves a sigh of agony and relief when the death of Bahadur Shah in exile was reported. The poet wrote that death had "liberated him from the chains of mortal existence and from imprisonment at the hands of the British" (*Urdu-i Mualla*, pp. 120-21).
6 Writing to a friend in Oudh (Ghulam Husain Bilgrami) a few weeks before the uprising on February 23, 1857, Ghalib comments. "Just think of the (evil) days we are fated to live in.... Even though it may not concern me directly, the ruin of the state of Oudh has depressed me all the more. In fact, I hold

that if an Indian has no feelings for Oudh he must be devoid of an elementary sense of justice" (*Ibid* p 403) When towards the end of his diary he has to record the fall of Lucknow Ghalib is frankly gloomy and in commenting on the event, confines himself to a verse from Sadi, purporting to say that "submission to the rulers on the part of the subjugated is no more than the mechanical and passive movement of a ball in response of the stroke of polo stick" (*Kulliyat*, p. 405).

7 When it was reported to the author that the ruler of Alwar was going to be reinstated with full powers, Ghalib (who subscri-
bed to the primacy of Determinism over Free Will in the phi-
losophical controversy of the age) sarcastically remarked in a
letter to a friend. "Just at the moment all of us are in the same
boat. They say the Maharajah is going to be restored to his
powers in November. But (take it from me) that his powers
will be of the same nature as those, conferred on us, human
beings, by God Almighty, for verily the initiative rests with
Him and the human beings only come in for blame...." (*Ud-i Hindi*, p. 93).

8 As an illustration, take the case of Maulana Fazle Haq (of
Khayrabad) who was later condemned to life imprisonment in
the Andamans and died there When in 1861, a friend of his
visited Calcutta, Ghalib anxiously asked him to enquire into
the affairs of the Maulana (*Urdu-i Moulla*, p 14), and when
the latter passed away, the author openly lamented over "the
death of such an estimable friend as the Pride of Creation
(*Fakhr-i-ijad-o-takwin*) Maulana Fazle Haq" while he himself
was doomed to drag on his 'miserable existence' (*Ibid.*, p. 420).
As to his solicitude for the old aristocracy there are frequent
references in his collection of letters. As a typical instance
Ghalib in his letter to Yusuf Mirza, dated November 28, 1858,
says "who on earth could gauge my feelings except the
Almighty? You know that people sometimes go mad under the
burden of sorrows and lose their wits I should not be surprised
if I were unhinged by these disastrous events it would be
amazing if I were not. I confess and hold Ali as my witness
that because of intense grief for the dead and the acute anxiety
for the living, the world around me now looks dark and sini-
ster To think that I am alive while the wives and children
of erstwhile nobles and aristocrats have to go begging in the
streets for their daily bread!" (*Ibid.*, pp 254-55) It should not
be forgotten that about this time the author himself was facing
near-destitution Once he had only one rupee and seven annas
between himself and starvation' (*Ibid*, pp. 250-51) Comment
ing on the destruction of the mansions of nobility at the hands
of the British, Ghalib on one occasion compared the British to
the "bully of a monkey who is bent on mischief and destroys
the houses of all and sundry with impunity' 'Damn thy arrog-
ance, O beast," he concluded (*Ibid*, p. 288)

9 *Kulliyat*, p. 389. Also in his letter dated January 14, 1885, addressed to Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan of Rampur (*Makatib-i Ghalib*, p. 9).

10 *Kulliyat*, p. 397. Also *Ud-i Hindi*, p. 14. From his diary Ghalib has excluded even ordinary Arabic words and terms which were then current.

11 It is interesting to note that the author does not even mention by name people like Maulana Fazle Haq and Mufti Sadruddin who were known to have sponsored the Fatwa of the Muslim Ulema in support of *jihad* against the British and were among his intimate and lifelong companions. In fact, the only person mentioned in his diary is Hakim Ahsanullah, who had acquired notoriety by his support of the British in the camp of the rebels and the fact is duly emphasized by Ghalib (*Kulliyat*, p. 387).

12 Introducing his diary Ghalib observes: "In truth it does not behove an emancipated mind to conceal the truth, particularly a pseudo-Muslim like me who does not owe allegiance to any particular denomination or creed and pays no heed whatsoever to a good name" (*Kulliyat*, p. 407). It should be noted in this connection that, in spite of his admiration for the bravery displayed by the rebels in their fight with the British Ghalib never forgave them for shedding the blood of innocent Englishmen in Delhi. For his humanism see, among others, his observations in *Urdu-i Maulla* (p. 42).

13 A condensed Urdu edition of his diary by Mirza Yaqub Beg Nami was first published from Delhi in 1922 by Hasan Nizami under the title *Ghalib-ka Roznamcha*. I have failed to find a reference to Ghalib's diary in any of the innumerable official and non-official histories of 1857.

14 Farsang is a measure of distance.

15 This is an allusion to the fable of "Sikander" and his search for "the water of immortality" (*ab-i-hayat*).

16 It is during these days that the author composed his famous Urdu verses describing the martial law, when "every English Tommy behaved like God Almighty and one was afraid of going out of his house. The Chowk was then turned into a slaughter-house while the homes looked like a prison In a word, the very particles of dust in Delhi cried aloud for the blood of a Mussalman" (*Urdu-i Mualla*, p. 373).

17 He is more explicit in an Urdu letter where he called it a "general massacre" (*Ibid.*, p 138). In another letter he referred, among other "invaders of Delhi, to the British who "destroyed life, property, honour, homes together with dwellers, in fact, the very earth and sky;—in a word, all that connotes life" (*Ud-i Hindi*, p. 90).

18 In another place the author refers to the British extinguishing the candle but at the same time announcing the tidings of the dawn and pointing the way to the light of the sun.

Bengali Literature Before And After 1857

(1856-85)

GOPAL HALDAR

BENGALI LITERATURE, in the years 1856 to 1861 was in the first throes of creative activity, the like of which it had never seen before. It had completed its preparatory period (roughly from 1800 to 1856), which may be said to have included four phases, viz., the Fort William phase (1801 to 1815), Ram Mohan phase (1815 to 1831), the "Young Bengal" ("Derozians") and *Sambad Prabhakar* phase (1831 to 1843), and, lastly, the Vidyasagar and *Tatwabodhini Patrika* phase (1843 to 1856).

Of course, literary activities formed only one of the facets of that complex and many-sided movement which has been called *Banglar Jagaran* (the Awakening of Bengal). In a broad sense, it included the Bengali renaissance and what is known as the Bengali reformation (religious and social reform activities), and lastly, political awakening—the complex of responses generated in our people by their growing contact with the bourgeois world, represented by the British rulers. It is supposed to have commenced with the activities of Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833) in Calcutta in 1815 and to have reached its heyday in the latter half of the 19th century. Personally I should view *Banglar Jagaran* as commencing with the foundation of the Hindu college in Calcutta in 1817. For, the Hindu College brought into existence a new and dynamic force, the urban middle-class intelligentsia, or the educated *bhadraloks*, of Bengal. And

the *bhadraloks* virtually shaped the life and thought of Bengal for about a century, i.e., roughly again, until 1914-1918 when World War I threw up new forces in the national and international arena.

There lay then behind the intelligentsia of 1857 a "colonial renaissance" at least 40 years old Two generations of the intellectuals had been reared on the liberal bourgeois ideology, and they energetically tried to overthrow the deadweight of Indian feudal ideas and institutions. The Indian reformation (started in 1815 by Ram Mohan Roy) was proceeding with renewed vigour (1843) under Devendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905), while social reform recorded its great victory under the leadership of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) in the passing of the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856, which was said to have added to the distrust of the sepoys and the orthodox section.

Politically also the middle-class intelligentsia had just discovered their way forward For example, they learnt to agitate under Ram Gopal Ghosh (1815-1868) for doing away with the invidious privileges of the Europeans in the mofussil courts (the so-called "Black Acts" of 1849); founded political institutions (1843) and united their organised strength in the British Indian Association (in 1851) "to promote the improvement and efficiency of the British Indian Government by every legitimate means in their power."

They had formulated their liberal demand in the petition, said to be drafted by Harish Chandra Mukerji (1824-1861), when the charter of the East India Company was about to be renewed in 1853, and demanded in that, among other things, the creation of an Indian legislature with an Indian majority. And lastly, they had just secured new openings for their educational aspirations and advancement through Sir Charles Wood's educational despatch of 1845 and the foundation of the three universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in January, 1857.

History has its paradoxes, some may call them "con-

traditions" and they cannot easily be explained away. To many of us it may seem strange that this intelligentsia of Bengal in the years of the "sepoy mutiny," 1857-1858, appeared to have been so little interested in the gigantic upheavals which shook the foundations of the British power in, at least, North India. It seems amazing that the most enlightened section of the Indian people was genuinely opposed to the sepoys. For the very same Bengali intelligentsia plunged headlong on the morrow of the 1857 revolt, or even before the night had really passed, in 1858-1859, into the *Nil Vidroha* (Indigo revolt) of central Bengal. Here was patriotism, here was courage, here was undeniable evidence that the intelligentsia of Bengal, who may be said to be allied to the "upper classes," were fighting with all their passion and skill for the cause of the oppressed peasantry, and were fulfilling their role in the national life of Bengal as the new *leaders of all sections* of the community.

Any narrow "class interpretation" then of the conduct of the Bengali intelligentsia during the 1857 revolt would fail to satisfy a good many students of Bengali life and letters of the 19th century. Whatever be the final verdict of history with regard to the character of the 1857 rebellion, the understanding of the Bengali people and the Bengali intelligentsia at the time was very different—and bound to be in the circumstances—from that of the Indian people and the Indian intelligentsia of a later date. Not merely the liberal aristocrats, like Raja Dakshina Ranjan (Mukherji), an ex-Derozian, of Lucknow were opposed to it. Even Bengali clerks in UP did not respond to the call for revolt. The graphic account of his experiences by Durga Das Bandyopadhyay (1835-1922) as narrated later in his *Vidrohe Bangala* (in the pages of the weekly *Vangavasi* at the encouragement of its nationalist editor) showed that the revolt in UP (i e , Bareilly) could not shake his loyalty to his employers.

The fundamental fact, of how the 1857 rebellion was understood by the Bengali intelligentsia, has to be recog-

nized and its causes properly analysed even though one should not agree to make light of the "class character" of the intelligentsia, which was so largely dependent for its fortune on the British Raj. An intelligentsia as mature as that we know, could not allow itself to be swerved from its liberal bourgeois policy by what it conceived to be an adventurist, haphazard and spontaneous feudal-reactionary military rising.

Bengali literature was prepared for the "leap" into the new world of ideas and forms that was revealed to the educated Bengali by the English language and literature. Let us examine briefly this new Bengali literature.

Bengali prose as an instrument of knowledge and enlightenment had been created between 1801 and 1856. Writing in the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* of 1856 Raj Narain Bose (1826-1899), the "grand father of nationalism" referred to this particular development of Bengali prose "in the last 10 or 12 years" and mentioned the three stalwarts, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Aksay Kumar Datta (1820-1886) of the *Tatwabodhini* writers and Rajendra Lal Mitra (1822-1891), the great Indologist who edited from 1851 *Vividartha-Sangraha*, the first illustrated monthly devoted to "archaeology, zoology, arts and crafts and literature."

Raj Narain Bose could have included himself and Devendra Nath Tagore, the father of the poet, as pioneers of reflective prose of real beauty, and at least another, Pyari Chand Mitra, (1814-1883), who as "Tek Chand Thakur" was already writing (1854) the first Bengali novel, *Alaler Gharer Dulal*, (Pet Son of a Big House) in the pages of the *Masik Patrika* that Pyari Chand and Radhanath Sikdar (1813-1870) of "Everest discovery" fame brought out in 1854.

Poetry of the transition as practised by its master, the patriot-poet Iswar Chandra Gupta or "Gupta Kavi" (1812-1859), had secured the services of an English-educated section, including Ranga Lal Bandyopadhyay (1827-1887), who was an avowed admirer of the great English poets.

Bengali poetry waited now for the advent of that genius Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873), who returned to Calcutta from Madras in 1856.

Bengali drama and stage, had its first modern initiation thanks to the Russian Gerasim Lebedeff as early as 1795 and was on the eve of significant developments. Adaptations of Sanskrit and even Shakespearean plays were being made all along; but the *Kulin-Kula-Sarvasva,* written and published in 1854 by Ram Narayan Tarkaratna (1822-1885), marked the birth of new Bengali drama as an instrument of social reform and entertainment. It was first staged at Nutan Bazar in Calcutta in March, 1857, when the sepoys were already restive at Barrackpore. But the Bengali stage had also reached in 1856 its "Age of the Patrons" when Kali Prasanna Sinha's (1840-1870) Jorasanko house stage came into existence. The Paikpara garden stage was to follow it in two years (1858).

The years of the rebellion were the very time in which the Bengali drama and stage was born under the patronage of the urban rich, the absentee landlords, and upper classes The panic and disturbances did not curb their enthusiasm for new dramas and entertainment after the European model. And, it is this enthusiasm and literary regard for drama, that was immediately responsible for the advent of the two geniuses of the times, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-1873).

No section of the intelligentsia appears about that time to have set any store by the heroic endeavours of the sepoys and their leaders Yet it must be noted at the same time that none of the writers, small or great, or even of the aristocracy depending on the British Raj, forgot that patriotism was a virtue. Almost all lamented the "fallen state of Mother India," her enslavement by 'foreigners," and exhorted their readers to unity, to courage and obviously to liberty

A typical device as we shall see later, was to take up a theme of the pre-British period of Indian history and

to inveigh against the *Yavanas* (etymologically *Yavanas* were Ionians, i.e., Greeks, but were meant to include in the context obviously the Muslim invaders, and in an implied way, the British rulers, too, were hinted at). Or, they would turn to a theme from the Puranas or ancient lore which supplied them with an invader-invaded or oppressor oppressed situation.

We have to note that intellectual efforts at this time were to a great extent still carried on in English. Particularly the problems of public life were discussed and debated mostly in English, though Bengali journalism (started about 1820) was already a force because of *Sambad Prabhakar* (1831, but a daily from 1839) and *Soma-Prakas* (1858).

Harish Chandra Mukherji of the *Hindoo Patriot* (1853) was a brilliant personality and forceful writer in English who commanded attention from the rulers (particularly from Lord Canning) and the ruled alike during the years of the rebellion. While repudiating the sepoys as misguided and superstition-ridden, Harish Chandra strongly counselled moderation at the hour of their suppression. But fiery was his denunciation of the indigo-planters and for three years, until his premature death in 1861, this champion of the cultivators of Bengal spared neither time nor money and became almost a national figure, ruined through litigation by the planters.

The press, we should remember whether English or Bengali, was at that time a nursery of the new born literary aspirants. One of the bilingual newspapers, *Samachar-Sudha-Varsan* (Hindi and Bengali) was suppressed during the rebellion, and another, *Hurkaru*, faced prosecution. This fact has to be given due weight in judging the anti-rebellion professions of the rest of the press or of literature, as we do later. But the measures, it appears, did not act as a deadweight on the literary and cultural activities. There was an urgency in them and the rebellion cast no shadow.

Let us recall only the outstanding examples in literature at this time.

Alaler Gharer Dulal by "Tek Chand" was published in 1858. It is a didactic novel upholding the cause of education and new culture and a brilliant sketch of contemporary life and of some typical personalities. It did not, however, concern itself with anything else, though patriotism was a frequent theme with Bengali writers of the time (1857-1858).

Iswar Gupta, who was the poet of transition as we said, was also a poet of patriotism and would go so far as to maintain: "Rather have in affectionate regard the dog of your country than the god of the foreigners."

He is full of topical references to the famine and other such crises including the 1857 revolt. But the frightful courage and cruelty of the rebels are only noted in wordy verses. His satirical song (*Chitan*) on the *Nilkar*, the indigo-planters, written before his death in 1859 (the Queen's direct rule had begun), is quite clear in its tone and temper—"We Bengalis are a herd of cattle, Oh mother, Queen Victoria," the poet appears to plead satirically, "We don't even know how to use our horns. The fodder grass and husks of corn are all that we want. Let not your white officers then despoil us of that," and so on.

The Bengali poets and writers never ceased lashing their people for their alleged timidity in anger and self-pity. It is a recurring theme in Bengali poetry up to the Swadeshi times (1905), and accounts to some extent for the reckless courage that the Bengali revolutionaries have evinced ever since. Anyway, patriotism was a staple food for Bengali literature even before 1850 and Todd's *Annals of Rajasthan* (it was later translated) fired Bengali imagination from about that time.

The new expression of this patriotism in literature was given in 1858 in the epic narrative poem, *Padmini Upakhyan* ("Tale of Padmini"). The poet Ranga Lal Bandyopadhyay was admittedly an admirer of Byron, Moore and Scott. The

epic has little poetry, but the poet broke forth into a sincere cry in the exhortation that his hero Bhim Sinha addressed to the Kshatriyas of Chitore:

> *Swadhinata-hinatay ke banchite chay re ke banchite chay?*
> *Dasatva srinkhal balo ke paribe pay he ke paribe pay?*

(Who is there willing to live without freedom, willing to live like that? Who wants to wear the fetters, ah, wear the fetters?)

There is no direct or indirect contemporary reference, however, to the events of 1857 revolt in the plays that were being staged at Jorasanko or Belgachia garden. Kali Prasanna Sinha's adaptations of *Vikram-Urvasi* (staged 1857), *Savitri-Satyavan* (staged 1858, the year when *Kulin Kula Sarvasva* was also on the boards) and Ram Narayan's *Ratnavali* (staged at Belgachia garden on July 31, 1858) bore no trace of it. And we have to remember that both prose and poetry were aglow with direct references to the *Nil Vidroha*, which came to a head after 1859.

The 1857 revolt was suppressed; and urged by its own creative aspirations Bengali literature took gigantic strides in the post-rebellion years. It had no time as yet to look back to re-examine that phenomenon.

All the humanism and patriotism of the intelligentsia found a ready outlet in the *Nil Vidroha*. Moreover it was a revolt and not a revolution, for which they were not prepared. For humanity was not an empty term with the generation of Vidyasagar; and the European planters with the British government ranged behind them, brought ruin to men like Harish Chandra Mukherji and imprisonment to a European missionary like Rev. J. Long (for publishing the English version of the drama *Nil-Darpan* as we shall see). But even the indigo revolt did not absorb all the energy and literary emotion that had been unleashed. Let us recall the outstanding achievements of Bengali literature in 1859-1862, when the literary renaissance, along with the reform movement led by young Keshab Chandra Sen (1828-1844), came to flower.

The Belgachia patrons of the stage first requisitioned (1858) the service of Michael Madhusudan Dutt for an English translation of the drama *Ratnavali* that they were staging (July, 1858), and then Madhusudan undertook to write for them original dramas in Bengali So Madhusudan turned to Bengali literature. The miracle happened and dramas, farces, epics and lyrics poured forth almost simultaneously, and all in full blaze of colour and life. *Sarmistha* was the first to see the light (January 1858) and to be staged (September 1859) even as the first blank verse .(Canto I. *Tilottama-Sambha Kavya*) was being written and presented (July-August, 1859, in the pages of Rajendra Lal Mitra's *Vividartha-Sangraha*) to the wondering readers. The tragedy *Padmavati* (1860) was produced when *Meghnadvad Kavya*, (1861), *Brajangana Kavya* (1860-61), and *Virangana Kavya* (1862) took the world by storm.

The poet was drunk with the grand themes of classical times. In typical renaissance spirit Madhusudan, however, produced also two social farces. *Ekei ki Bale Sobhyata?* (Is this civilization?) in 1860 satirised his own fellow spirits, the English-educated Bengalis, for their loose morals and drunkenness. *Buro Saliker Ghare Rom* (1860) satirised with equal sharpness the older generation of Bengal for their profligacy and hypocrisy.

It is impossible, however, to read any political implications in any of his works. The great epic *Meghnadvad Kavya* (1861) may be interpreted in a way to uphold a rebel or an invaded ruler (Ravana and his brave son) as the hero. But even in that case it reflected first Madhusudan's own revolt against feudalism, i.e., the accepted gods and codes of Hinduism, and, secondly, the influence of Milton who unconsciously had made out of Satan (*Paradise Lost*) a defeated Cromwellian hero.

Madhusudan's own eagle flight was, however of very short duration (1859-62). He wrote little after 1862, except for the sonnets, *Chaturdas-padi Kavitavali*, (1866), in which

he spoke in faultless pathos of his personal hopes, faith and despair.

Madhusudan was proud and must have felt awkward when he saw the Rev. J. Long being fined and imprisoned for publishing the English translation of *Nil-Darpan* (The Indigo Plantation Mirror) that Madhusudan was commissioned to do anonymously (under the signature, "A Native").

It has to be remembered that, even the original drama, the epoch-making *Nil-Darpan*, had to be published anonymously at first from Dacca in 1860. The dramatist Dinabandhu Mitra had to describe himself there as *Kenachit pathikena* (Wayfarer). Long's prosecution showed forcibly that the liberal intelligentsia was far from being free to express itself on the question of the indigo trouble, not to speak of the 1857 revolt. It can be surmised then that if any contemporary writer had any sympathy for the sepoys, certainly he could speak his mind only to court disaster. He had to take recourse, therefore, to innuendoes for the purpose.

One or two such guarded hints of latter days, the late sixties of the 19th century, may be traced. Some of these are in the early published comments (1868-1870) of Sisir Kumar Ghose of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Bengali). The writer, frequently upheld (e.g., on May 28, 1868) the battles of 1857-58 as battles for liberation; objected (on March 3, 1870) in that connection to the word "mutiny," and held that the battle failed in 1857-58 only because Indians lacked unity. Criticising the colonial ruin of native industries, he referred to the desperation to which this would drive men like, for example, the "Sepoy Mutiny, which we do not approve."

Another interesting reference is found in the *Huttum Pynchar Naksa* (1861-1864), (Sketches by Huttum, the Owl). Huttum was no other than the same young radical Kali Prasanna Sinha mentioned before. He referred to the gathering of the Indians at Gopal Mullick's garden under

the leadership of Raja Radha Kanta Dev, after the suppression of the revolt to declare their loyalty to the Queen. In Huttum's inimitable words they are suggested to have said "Mother, we are your Bengali sheep; we have no desire to be Americans," i.e., to revolt and become free.

It is doubtful, however, if any Bengali of any position and education did have any unmixed sympathy with the 1857 rebels when the rising took place. As time passed, it seemed that the "unmixed denouncement" of the "mutiny" was also becoming, about 1870, a thing of the past in the circle of Bengali educated classes. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was an example of it (1868). Nationalism was becoming the dominant note of our literature when Bankim Chandra Chattopadhay (1838-1894) appeared on the scene in 1865 with *Durgesh Nandini* (1865). It was the first historical romance in Bengali, if we leave out Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhyay's long story *Anguri Binimay* (1862).

A more self-composed era of creative assurance was now entered, and with the founding of *Vanga-Darsan* in 1872 (the year of the foundation of the National Theatre and the first public stage) Bankim undertook the task of formulating the philosophy of Bengali nationalism. The word "national" had the highest premium now (about 1870) and Naba Gopal Mitra, who was the chief spirit behind the *Jatiya Mela* (1867) movement, came to be known as "national" Nabagopal. Brahmo liberalism and the reform movement of Sri Keshab Chandra Sen and his companions was outwardly still dominant, but critical conservatism was organising itself (under Bankim's leadership) on the basis of national pride and "national" culture, to be revitalized with the science and rational thought of the West (And "national" meant to them "Hindu" as the "Hindu Mela" showed.) British rule was also revealing itself about the time as imperialism in India; and trust in its progressive role diminished day after day. Lord Lytton's repressive policy (1876-80) further helped the process of Indian disillusionment.

The liberals organised a new political institution (Indian Association, 1875) and Surendra Nath Banerji ran campaigns (1877-78) throughout northern India. Literature between the years 1865 and 1885 (1882 was the year of the publication of Bankim's *Ananda Math*, and politically the year of the Ilbert Bill Agitation) was in full flower.

Poets and novelists and essayists had all found their own. They took up the challenge on their plane. There were scores of them; and almost all took up from the pre-British historical or Hindu Puranic sources the invader-invaded situation or the oppressor-oppressed relation as their theme, and projected their own ideas and emotions against foreign domination of India. Literature was on the side of nationalism and freedom. The veil was at times was seen through as in the case of Bankim's *Ananda Math* and Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay's (1838-1903) *Bharat Sangit* (1870), a stirring call to freedom. A similar call by Mohanlal in Babin Chandra Sen's *Palasir Yuddha* (1875), however, escaped bureaucratic displeasure.

The 1857 rebellion came to be regarded as a patriotic struggle of valiant men led by valiant leaders, like Rani Laxmi Bai, Kunwar Singh, Tatya Tope, etc. Of course, it was judged futile but then it was thought that it had been "betrayed" by the Indian feudal princes and Indian mercenaries in British service. Rajani Kanta Gupta's first volume of the monumental work *Sipahi Yuddher Itihas*, (History of the Sepoy War) was published in 1876. It was necessarily limited to the British sources and guarded in its views. But the *Itihas* is unmistakable in its purpose. Hindu nationalism was a new force, and it did not consider the religious fear and fanaticism of the sepoys of 1857 harmful and distasteful as the contemporary Hindu (and Brahmo) liberals (1857-1861) had found them. Young Rabindra Nath Tagore, a lad of seventeen then, wrote in the pages of *Bharati* (1878) in open admiration of the heroes of the sepoy war even though their efforts were "useless" (*aytha*), and upheld in particular Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope

and old Kunwar Singh, as examples of herioc courage and patriotism, national heroes whom the British historians had sedulously blackened with their brush. He, however, was not a Hindu revivalist as such. In 1898 Rabindra Nath in his short story *Durasa* (Disenchantment) tried in his masterly way to puncture this Hindu revivalism with a picture of a rebel hero. The revolt as revivalism had no halo for the son of Devendra Nath Tagore and admirer of Raj Narain Bose.

So we may presume a gradual change in the climate of opinion (1864-85). Let us also realize in this connection the psycho-aesthetic twists and devices by which social reality is transformed, consciously and unconsciously, in the process of artistic creation It would be permissible then to presume that the 1857 revolt might have had its influence on *Ananda Math* (1882) of Bankim Chandra, the evident subject matter of which was the Sannyasi rebellion of 1778-79. It breathed though *Virbahu Vadh Kavya* (1864) and *Vitra-Samhar Kavya* (1875-77), *Bharat Sangit* (1870) and other poems of Hemchandra.

It will be an unwarranted generalisation, however, to hold that any of the Bengali writers unequivocally supported or condemned the revolt of 1857-58 even in these later times. Contradiction was almost inherent in the mental make-up of the colonial middle classes and of their writers and thinkers. Those, for example, who were bitterly anti-feudal were mildly anti-imperialist, and those who were definitely anti-imperialist upheld, out of a false sense of nationalism at times, feudal ideology and institutions. A few of the liberals sought to strike a balance. With all our writers, however, Hindu or Brahmo, the democratic content remained weak.

A third fact remains certain that the contemporaries did not develop any love for the 1857 revolt even in later times. Pandit Shivnath Sastri described it in balanced terms in his account of Ram Tanu Lahiri and his times (1904); but he discreetly evaded this issue in his autobio-

graphy (1918). Raj Narain Bose, writing his autobiography about 1888, gave a picture of Bengali panic and suspicion of the sepoys which showed how alien they were to the Bengalis. Devendra Nath Tagore in his autobiography (written 1895), published 1898, studiously avoided politics and narrated his experience of the rising in the Simla hills. Panic and fright, he found, had completely unnerved the Europeans all around. At least, the "mutiny" had proved that all Europeans were not heroes born to rule, and its suppression showed that sanity and justice were not to be expected from the British ruling class. Literature began to draw on that feeling more and more in the closing decades of the 19th century.

Folk Songs On 1857*

P. C. JOSHI

FOLK ART-FORMS in India have been the traditional media for approaching the masses. There is evidence to show that the organisers of the 1857 uprising skilfully and effectively used this art-form to arouse the people. Trevelyan states that during festivals and tamashas "the dolls employed in theatres began to speak a strange language and to dance a dangerous dance. Panwadas (ballads) and Lawaniyas (folk musical art-form that stirs pathos and softer emotions) were sung near police stations. Ballad of *Alha Udal* (a heroic ballad that stirs the blood) was also employed. From Calcutta to Punjab dangerous tamashas in the night were exhibited.... Female gypsies were also used.... The effect in rousing hatred was tremendous.... Bhishtis (water-carriers) refused water, ayas (maid-servants) left services."[1] Kaye also states, "There were two subjects which the kathputlee-wallahs (puppeteers) extremely delighted to illustrate—the degradation of the Moghul, and the victories of the French over the English, the one intended to excite hatred, the other contempt, in the minds of the spectators."[2]

* For helping me to collect the folk songs included in this paper and in checking them up, I am deeply indebted to the following: Sri Vrindavanlal Varma of Jhansi, Dr. Udai Narayan Tiwari of Allahabad University, Dr. K. S. Upadhyaya of Banaras, Sri Ganesh Chaube, Maharaj Kumar Durga Shankar Prasad Singh "Vimal" of Hathras and Smt. Mahasweta Bhattacharya of Calcutta. I should also like to express here my gratitude to Sri Shamsher Bahadur Singh, Omkar Nath Kachru, Y. Navalpuri and Sunil Janah, who have helped me with the translation of these folk songs.—*P.C.J.*

It was not only that the organisers of this national revolt used from above the traditional folk art-forms to reach revolutionary propaganda to the people below, but that anti-British hatred was so deeply welling up among the common folk that we have a whole crop of folk songs on 1857, composed by unknown but really talented folk poets and which are genuinely folk for they have been composed with effortless spontaneity. The 1857 uprising was brutally suppressed and nearly a century of British terroristic rule followed when to sing of 1857 was to court jail and worse, and yet there are a larger number of folk songs available on 1857 than on any other national event of modern times. In this paper I am giving the translation of some of these songs to illustrate the political outlook of the people in those days and how the most sensitive of them, the folk poets, reacted to the events connected with the uprising.

The beginning of this national uprising is described in the song below,[3] in the psychological framework of those days:

That was in the year Fourteen[1]
In Meerut it all began.
Presidencies Badal[2], Karapat[3], Bengal
already vast areas span.
But Firinghi[4], bedevilled by fate impending,
struck on an evil plan.
For the terrible Goddess Kali[5] was
to engulf Vilayat[6] again
New cartridges carry the cow's fat
and the pig's sting and stain.
And the sipahee[7] in bitter revolt was
firing away his carbine.
Says Dhawal Ram[8]: The Angrez from Calcutta
sneaked out in the year Fourteen!

The earlier fear of the Firinghi was gone, he was "bedevilled by fate impending," Kali, the Goddess of Des-

1 Reference to 1857 A.D 2 Badal Bombay 3 Karapat: Madras. 4 Firinghi: Foreigner, white-man. 5 Kali: Goddess of Destruction 6 Vilayat: Foreign land, here England 7 Sipahee: Indian soldier. 8 Dhawal Ram: The bard and author of this song.

truction herself, had decided to "engulf Vilayat," for had not the Firinghi secretly used the unclean cows' fat and pigs' lard in the cartridges meant for the use of the Hindu and Muslim soldiers? Again when "the Angrez from Calcutta" is pictured as "sneaking out," it is no mere flight of fancy. Even Kaye and Malleson's account of the "Mutiny" speaks of the panic that had seized the white inhabitants of Calcutta.

The brief but beautifully worded song below gives some idea of the revolutionary passion of those days:

Storm in the river
Far off is Englishtan
Hurry up, hurry up, quit
You perfidious Firinghi!

The national insurrection began at Meerut. The song on Meerut[4] is a picturesque account of the thorough beating given to the British when the revolt broke out there. It breathes self-confidence:

Oh, come and look!
In the Bazaar of Meerut,
The Firinghi is waylaid and beaten!
The whiteman is waylaid and beaten!
In the open Bazaar of Meerut
Look, oh look, (he is beaten).
His gun is snatched
His horse lies dead
His revolver is battered.
In the open Bazaar
He is waylaid and beaten
Look, oh look!
The Firinghi is waylaid and beaten
In the Bazaar of Meerut
Look, oh look!

The uprising had acquired a mass character, with large-scale peasant participation in the area all round Meerut and Delhi. In Aligarh Amani Singh was the hero,

thrown up from the peasant ranks. These few lines on him describe the mettle of such local insurgent leaders of those days:

> Amani, yes, that's my name.
> If I drink not Ganga's water, it's a shame!

Drinking the Ganga's water implied determination to liberate the whole area up to the bank of the Ganga and celebrating it with a drink of its holy water.

In this region, as in other parts of India, the bhabi (elder brother's wife) and devar (husband's younger brother) relationship is one of intimate friendship and permissible social liberties. The song on the Rebel Warrior[5] is an old traditional song sung by women. It shows how Indian womenfolk considered the death-defying heroism of their men-folk as their own great pride.

> The army has attacked the fort
> My devar is facing the screaming bullets.
> One Firinghi, my darling has killed.
> Two Firinghis, my devar seized and threw inside the dungeon.
> I reproached him and he was angered terribly.
> There (on the other side)
> An order was given,
> And the Firinghi armies—
> Got ready and stormed the fort.
> But see, my devar
> Still unperturbed,
> Is fighting them as though it is mere play to him.
> Oh, dear sister
> Much, very much did I tell him.
> (But he doesn't listen)
> Now, even the shells are finished
> (But) He says, "I will not yield"
> And thus, he heeds not
> Ah! my little devar.

Oudh was annexed by the British on February 7, 1856, and its Nawab, Wajid Ali Shah, duly exiled The song below[8] portrays the event:

> Our homeland, Hazrat[1], since your exile
> looks utterly desolate,
>
> Bereft of pomp and power is your majesty!
> Lost is the game; gone the Khayal[2].
>
> The Begums[3] rode to a far exile,
> their homeland left forever.
>
> The Angrez[4] with his might and main
> marched in to seize the land.
>
> Not a soul said 'nay' to him:
> no one took up arms against him.
>
> Laid waste the Angrez our Kaiser Bagh;
> For Calcutta left our King.
>
> What solace left for us, what support!

The song is very sad and shows how depressed the people became after their homeland was annexed by the British. Certain points are worth noting. Firstly, Wajid Ali Shah was known to be the typical representative of a decaying feudal regime—corrupt, wasteful and inefficient and yet he was looked upon with sympathy, for with him went national sovereignty as well. One's own ruler, irrespective of his merits, is preferred to foreign rule. Secondly, the Oudh homeland is called "mulk" (country). The conception of India as our common motherland had not yet emerged, one's own homeland is yet the only country they knew as their own. Thirdly, it is clearly realised that the British rely on their "might" to "seize" other lands. Fourthly, deep anguish was felt at the failure to resist foreign aggression and that no one "took up arms." It is this deep feeling of national humiliation, at newly lost independence, that made Oudh the storm centre of the 1857 uprising

1 Hazrat: Term denoting great respect, here refers to the king of Oudh. 2 Khayal: A popular style of classical music 3 Begums Queens. 4 Angrez: The English.

The lines below from the song "Inside Lucknow"[7] describe what happened in Lucknow:

> In Alam Bagh[1] bullets are flying; in Machchi Bhawan[2]
> The artillary roars.
> Swords are plying at the Baillie Guard[3]
> Arrows have overcast the sky with darkness.
> Now outside the walls
> The soldiers all bewail their lot; and across the gateway
> Bemoans his fate the Kotwal.
> The Begums mourn in the palace,
> Their hair hanging loose in disorder.
> Abandoned lies the artillery in the magazine,
> And unlooked-after the elephants
> In the elephants' stable.
> Chargers and swift horses wander groomless in the city.
> And lost behind are all my comrades too.

It is a picture of weeping and wailing after defeat. There is no militant faith in the future, in the destiny of our nation. It grew later, when the lessons of this defeat were assimilated by the common people.

Rana Beni Madho was of feudal origin and became a popular hero for rallying the countryside and successfully challenging for months British authority. The song below[8] on this feudal-patriot became very popular during the insurrection and has retained its popularity thereafter:

> Sepoys of Rana Bahadur in Oudh, O Ram!
>   Led what a wild storm!
> Over and over again in his overtures thus
> Did the Lat[4] implore: "Oh come, Brother Rana join us!
> Martial honours from London
>   I'll get you in its lieu,
> A Suba[5] in Oudh carve out and place it under you!"
> But to all such messages wrote the Rana in reply

1 Alam Bagh A suburb of Lucknow which the British Army Command used as base for their attack on Lucknow.

2 Machchi Bhawan An old mud fort within Lucknow which the British strengthened and used as a strong-point but were forced to quit during the rebellion when they found that they could no longer hold it.

3 Bailie Guard: Popular name for the British residency building which was besieged during the rebellion but successfully defended by the British

4 Lat: British Governor. 5 Suba: Province.

"Ye be too clever with me! Oh Lat, do not ye try!
As long as I breathe, my only resolve is, know.
To dig the very foundations of you, and throw
You out!" The zamindars all unite and make
The Angrez before them tremble with fear and quake.
Disunity one by one would cut them apart,
And destroy the very foundations of their fort.

The attempt of the British to bribe him with a Suba in Oudh is no poet's fancy. There is the British Revenue Commissioner Gubbin's own statement: "We are bribing them (the talukdars) with jagirs."[9] This was to break the unity of the insurgent-front and win influential allies for the restoration of British authority.

The Rani of Jhansi rose as an epic figure out of this national insurrection. Sir Hugh Rose was the famous British Commander who led the British forces against her and ultimately reconquered Central India. After the end of the campaign and exhausted by it, resting in cool Poona, he wrote in his official report: "Although a lady she was the bravest and the best military leader of the rebels. A man among the mutineers." The same tribute ungrudgingly paid to her by the British general is lovingly embodied in these lines from a very popular folk song:[10]

How valiantly like a man fought she,
the Rani of Jhansi!
On every parapet a gun she set,
Raining fire of hell,
How well like a man fought the Rani of Jhansi,
How valiantly and well!

The refrain of this song *Khoob lari mardani, Jhansiwali Rani* became the basis of a very popular modern poem which made Smt Subhadra Kumari Chauhan famous.

The Rani's capacity to inspire her followers can be illustrated from several folk songs. Ghulam Gaus Khan was the famous Chief Gunner of the Rani's artillery and his friend and comrade, Khudadad Khan guarded the main gate of Jhansi fort. Both were killed in the last ditch de-

fence of the fortress on April 2, 1858. The song below[11] contains Khudadad's last wrods:

> We have to die one day, brother
>   and I shall choose today
> For our queen I shall lay down
>   my life.
> I shall hack the Firinghi with my
>   sword
> And the world will forever
>   remember me!

There is a very telling song[12] on how she raised her revolutionary army, how out of nobodies, the common people, she made soldiers and how out of "nothing" she equipped them.

> From clay and stones
> She moulded her army.
> From mere wood
> She made swords.
> And the mountain she transformed
>   into a steed.
> Thus she marched to Gwalior!

The Rani like a skilful commander adopted and carried out scorched-earth tactics. The song below[13] refers to the trees between Jalaun and Kalpi, in the campaign after Jhansi fell into British hands.

> Fell the trees,
>   commanded the Rani of Jhansi
> Lest the Firinghis hang
>   our soldiers on them
> So that the coward British
>   may not be able to shout:
> "Hang! Hang them in the trees."
> So that, in the hot sun
>   they may have no shade!

Hanging the insurgent soldiers and peasants *en masse* did take place on a large scale during Neill's march from Allahabad to Kanpur and in the other campaigns of the British commanders. The genius of the Rani consisted in

the fact that against the mass terror tactics of the British imperialist commanders she evolved counter-tactics of scorched earth to be organised on a mass scale.

Under the Rani's leadership what patriotic courage must have been instilled into the insurgent sepoys and the people surcharged with what self-confidence that such a folk song [14] could be written:

> Amidst tears from his eyes
> Proud Hugh Rose spoke.
> I beg you for one pot of water
> To quench my thirst
> with the first potful
> and ask for more
> (To get that coveted pot)
> Hand over the guns
> the ammunition
> and also your sword!

The Rani's noble example and supreme sacrifice have blazed the path for countless sons and daughters of India to join the freedom struggle. She is one of the immortals of our national movement and such songs have kept alive her memory.

Kunwar Singh is another popular hero of 1857 widely mentioned in folk songs. Forty million Bhojpuris adore him as the "father of Bhojpuris" In mass popularity he ranks with the Rani of Jhansi. He was as much dreaded by the British as he was loved by the people in the region between Calcutta and Lucknow, and on either side of the Ganges

Kunwar Singh was already 75 years old in 1857 and yet he plunged into and led the struggle in Bhojpur, his homeland, the region of western Bihar and Eastern U.P. Even in his old age, he fought pitched battles and also conducted long-drawn guerilla struggle against the British. The insurgent Dinapur regiments joined his banner and he marched all the way to Banda, Kanpur, Lucknow, Azamgarh and crossing the Ganges came back home and died fighting in liberated Jagdishpur, his native place.

Malleson characterises him as "one of the three natives

of India thrown up to the surface by the Mutiny, who showed any pretensions to the character of a strategist—the others being Tatya Tope and the Oudh Maulvi."[15] Forrest in the *History of the Mutiny* paid tributes to Kunwar Singh's "strong will, dash and courage [which] won allegiance and the devotion of followers."

All that Kunwar Singh stood and fought for is portrayed in a very moving lullaby:[16]

Oh Babua, that day our grandpa took up
his sword
Oh Babua, to keep safe our pride and
our plenty.
Our religion, our cows!
Oh Babua, to protect the rent-free lands of our widows!
And to protect our mothers and
sisters from disgrace
Oh Babua, to defend the fair name of
our fathers and grandfathers;
Oh Babua, when hour of calamity was upon us,
Oh Babua, that day our grandpa
took up his sword!

* * *

Oh Babua, when the Marathas had laid down
their lives
And the Sikhs they fought to death,
Oh Babua, the sons of the Peshwas had
turned into slaves.
Oh Babua, the Emperor of Delhi, he too
a pauper had become
And they begged and begged but could receive
no alms!
Oh Babua, that day our grandpa took up his sword!

* * *

Oh Babua, scorpions bred in our cannons
Oh Babua, the barrels of our
guns have rusted.
Oh Babua, we had made
sickles out of the steel of our
swords.
Oh Babua, the Bhojpuris had even
thrown their lathis aside

Oh Babua, that day our grandpa
took up his sword!

* * *

Oh Babua, he was eighty years old,
Oh Babua, his head shook as he
moved,
Oh Babua, his hair was white
like the heron,
Oh Babua, all his thirty two teeth
he had lost,
Oh Babua, that day our grandpa
took up his sword!

After the Dinapur regiment's revolt on July 25 when the sepoys joined him, Kunwar Singh liberated the district town of Arrah and on July 29 annihilated the British force under Dunbar in the battle of Gangi. The very first battle established Kunwar Singh's prestige. The British, however, under Eyre put through another attack from Buxar. On August 7 the battle of Bibiganj was fought. The British were much better armed and equipped. Kunwar Singh put up dogged resistance, harassed and weakened the enemy, and later organised a masterly retreat, successfully escaping with all his force. This battle is described in the following sohar[17] (an art-form in folk music), generally sung by women, with great passion:

It was a night of the month of Bhado[1]
And dark clouds covered the sky
Babu Kunwar Singh went to war
at the dead of the night
The Firinghis trembled with fear
The skies poured torrents of rain
And the guns showered bullets in
the battle-field below.
Babu Kunwar Singh's horse advanced
with prancing steps
And the white army, he kept beheading!
Heads fell thumping,
With the clap of each trotting hoof!

1 Bhado: A month of the rainy season.

And once when he was surrounded
alone by the Whites
He fought most wondrously.
He held his reins between his teeth
And fought with both hands
His horse ran in strategic circles
And sword clanked against sword
A bloody war was fought in Bibiganj
The cannons roared and the bayonets flashed
And the contending sides fell
upon each other
Eyre was stricken with panic and he
struck his chest in despair
He said "This Babu, he is a wizard
Swiftly like a tiger he pounces
Blessed is the mother who bore
A son mighty as the mountains!
The Firinghis' Raj is now doomed
Yes, it can be saved no more.
I am helpless here, here fights,
a man like Kunwar Singh!"
The poet Nath sings a "sohar"
Kunwar's fame shall live for ever!

There are also whole Panwaras (ballads) devoted to Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh (Kunwar's younger brother). I give some extracts below from the Panwara on the battle of Dulaur[1] which helps to recreate the atmosphere of the times and indicates the ideas and sentiments that moved the insurgents.

About Kunwar Singh's contact with the sepoy regiments it is stated:

Wrote he, "O Havaldar, listen to what I say
I have risen against the English
Evil are the ways of the English
They ask us to eat their food,
They ask us to drink with them![1]

1 To eat or drink with the foreigners meant losing one's caste and being thrown outside the social pale

They press us to bite the cartridges"[1]
This the Havaldar read
An' what's the message he sent forth
The Havaldar in person
Came to Jagdishpur
(And this is what he said)
"O Babu, listen to my pledge
The cartridge, I will bite never,
Their water, I shall drink never,
I am a Brahmin, or a Rajput,
A Sheikh or a Syed am I,
I am Moghul or also a Pathan,
Their cartridge I shall bite never
O Babu, listen I pledge myself!"

Kunwar Singh's memory to the people of Bihar meant liberation from foreign thraldom. Every year during the Holi (festival of colours) they sing of him and repeat this pledge:[19]

O Babu Kunwar Singh,
We shall dye no more our garments
in sacred saffron—
Till your Raj comes again.
From hither came the Firinghis
to surround them
And from thither
came the two Kunwar brothers.
As freely as the spray of colour in Holi
The guns of both spouted fire.
In the middle raged
a grim battle.
O Babu Kunwar Singh,
We shall dye no more our garments
in sacred saffron—
Till your Raj comes again.

Rajputana connected the insurgent north with Bombay, the first British base in India. Not only the people of Raj-putana but of the whole country looked to the Rajput

1 The cartridges issued with the new Enfield rifles by the British had a paper attached which had to be bitten off with their teeth by the soldiers. The grease used was of cow and pig-fat, considered unclean by the Hindus and Muslims respectively, involving the danger of losing one's religion.

princes to rise and help hurl the British back to the seas, but these feudal princes clung to British power and did not answer the call of patriotic duty. Surajmal was the famous court poet of Bundi who tried his utmost to persuade the princes to join the national uprising but he failed. He put his bitter disillusionment and indignation into very powerful poetry. Below are some of his couplets (Duhas):[20]

> The boars lay waste the greenery, the elephants
> muddle the lake
> While the lion is lost in his lioness' love,
> oblivious of the stake,
> Don't be called now Simhas[1], O Thakurs,[2] while
> alien mercy you seek—
> Only those whose paws fell the elephants, are
> worth the name, not the meek.
> Unmindful of the virtues you are heir to, upon aliens you fawn,
> And in lazy ways and pleasures soft, your
> precious days you drown.
> All glory to crumbling humble huts, to the
> grass on their mudwalls.
> And fie on the ruling chieftains high and towering Rajmahals[3]
> To the plunderers of the palaces, the huts are but a curse
> If they turn to the huts to loot, sure death, for nothing
> they traverse.

I do not know of any contemporary poet who had such intense patriotic faith and showed such earthy realism. What deep impact the 1857 uprising must have made on the minds of contemporary people as to make a traditional feudal poet, like Surajmal break with and roundly denounce his feudal patrons!

If feudal poets could be so moved the folk poets of course felt festive and wrote with abandon. The second most influential man in Jodhpur, after the ruling princes, the Thakur of Auwa, revolted against his liege lord, the Maharaja and also the suzerain of his suzerain, the British. He rallied the peasantry around and also some patriotic feudal

1 Simha: the surname of Rajputs meaning 'lion.' 2 Thakur: A Rajput chieftain, literally 'lord.' 3 Rajmahals: Royal palaces.

chieftains. He trounced the armies of the ruler of Jodhpur, killed in battle Monck Mason, the British Political Agent, and for months defied Lawrence, the British Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana. The struggle of Auwa is sung in folk songs. Below is a very popular one,[21] sung usually during the Holi season.

Oh, our dark-skinned men have
pitched their tents in the Banya's[1]
pasture lands;
Our Raja,[2] he is with the Whites,
and he is making war on us!
The white Firinghis have black caps on,
Hey, the black-capped whites are
fanning out on us!

* * *

The shells from the outsider's guns
are hitting only the dust,
But oh, our guns are smashing
their camps!
This is glorious Auwa!
Oh, you glorious Auwa,—
Auwa, you are the pillar that
supports this land!

* * *

Oh, when our guns go off they
Shake even the Aravalli hills!
Oh, the lord of Auwa is praying
to the Goddess Sugali![3]
And Hurrah, the battle is on!
Auwa is a land of her warrior sons,
Hurrah, the battle is on!

* * *

Oh, the Raja's cavalry are
pursuing their own dark countrymen,
But the horses of Auwa are
kicking them with their hind legs
Keeping the fighting on
Let the battle go on,
Victory will be yours

1 Banya: Merchant and usurer. 2 Raja: King 3 Sugali: the family deity.

Oh, keep the fighting on
Let the battle go on!

This song is full of the spirit of the trench and breathes supreme self-confidence How simply the role of "our Raja" is described? "He is with the Whites and he is making war on us!" It was the great experience of the 1857 uprising that enabled our people to see through the role of the Indian feudals, and break with them, who were so far regarded by them as their traditional leaders. The 1857 struggle paved the path for the Indian anti-imperialist movement to become also anti-feudal, i.e., to discover the correct strategy for the future victory.

These folk songs on 1857 not only realistically reflect the spirit of the 1857 days, but they are a valued part of our great national heritage. They contain our first noble patriotic poems and are thus a part of our national political heritage. They contain the only available records on the outlook, sentiments and aspirations of the common people during the 1857 national uprising. They are thus valuable historical documents of our national movement.

NOTES

1 Trevelyan, *Cawnpur, Short Narratives.*
2 Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War*, vol. I, p 246f
3 "In the Year Fourteen": From *Indian Antiquary*, (1911).
4 Collected through K. L. Chancharik from the Brij area.
5 This song as also the one on Amani Singh was collected through Bhagwan Singh Vimal, Hathras.
6 *Indian Antiquary*, (1911), "Songs about the King of Oudh." Collected by William Crooke of the Indian Civil Service from village contacts.
7 *Ibid.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 Quoted by Forrest in *Indian Mutiny*, vol. II.
10 *Indian Antiquary*. "Songs of the Mutiny" by W Crooke. Crooke collected this song from a village school teacher of Etawah district. I had the text checked up from the Bhojpuri version of

the same song by Dr. Udai Narayan Tiwari of Allahabad and Dr. K. S. Upadhyaya of Banaras.

11 From Mahashweta Bhattacharya, *Jhansir Rani* (Bengali).

12 *Ibid.*

13 From Sri Vrindavanlal Varma, Jhansi.

14 *Ibid*

15 Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, vol II, p. 453

16 From Sri Durga Shankar Prasad Singh, a descendant of Kunwar Singh.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 From the Kunwar Singh number of the monthly magazine, *Bhojpuri*

20 From the Rajasthan quarterly, *Parampara*, special poetry number entitled "Gora Hat Ja."

21 *Ibid.*

PART THREE

British Opinion And The Indian Revolt

JAMES BRYNE

THE PICTURE OF the Indian revolt of 1857 which has been repeatedly impressed on generations of British school boys is of the British people, united in horror at the "atrocities" committed by ignorant and superstitious Indians on British men, women and children, who were dutifully carrying the burden of Empire in the distant sub-continent. In spite of the vast academic machinery available, very little research seems to have been done on the contemporary sources to determine the actual reaction of the people of Britain—the omission of it is in itself a fact of some historical significance—but it is already becoming clear that the picture of British opinion, hitherto widely accepted, does not correspond with the facts.

This short study will be concerned particularly with the reaction of the British working class. It is, however, essential to place it in the context of the varied reactions of the British bourgeoisie, which expressed three main conflicts. First, there was the conflict with regard to the part which Christianity should play in British policy towards India: should the Indians be converted to the "one true religion" or be allowed to continue in "heathen idolatry and superstition?" Secondly, there was the conflict between the supporters of the East India Company and its opponents; and thirdly, there was a conflict between those who felt that the attempt to incorporate India under British

rule was a mistake—the "Little Englanders"—and those who looked on the venture as a glorious page in British history, destined to add the brightest jewel to the British imperial Crown.

These three conflicts were not separate and their interconnections were responsible for much of the uncertainty displayed by the ruling class in face of the revolt.

One other point making for difference of opinion should also be mentioned: the question of the so-called "atrocities" committed by the rebels during the revolt. Doubtless in assessing the truth of the reports, members of the bourgeoisie were often influenced by the attitude they had taken to the three conflicts already mentioned, but the scepticism with which the reports were received by some was as remarkable as the fury with which reprisals were advocated and applauded by others. Of this the British schoolboys know nothing.

On the place of Christianity in India, Greville, clerk to the Privy Council, had received a letter from Anson, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in India, written just before the revolt occurred. Anson referred to a "strange feeling of discontent pervading the Indian army from religious causes and the suspicion that we are going to employ our irresistible power in forcing Christianity upon them." Greville comments: "It is not true, but the natives will never be quite convinced that it is not, as long as Exeter Hall and the Missionaries are permitted to have *carte blanche* and work their will as they please in those regions."[1] Later he wrote of "the grand plan of Christianising India, in the furtherance of which the High Church and the Low Church appear to be bidding against each other."[2] *The Times* was among those who felt that "The object for which we ought to consider ourselves to hold India is the future Christianity and civilisation of the people,"[3] and the *Morning Post* held that "we have pampered and petted.... we have nursed and dandied and spoonfed every prejudice, Mohammedan or Hindoo, however irrational, however monstrous, however

opposed to our own views, sentiments and feelings." [4] But Gladstone was almost completely silent;* his nose in a Divorce Bill, and Disraeli, intent on bringing down Lord Palmerston's government, and on his grand design for placing India directly under the British Crown, omitted Christianity from his arguments.

The reaction of the Radical, Richard Cobden, and also of the Christian Socialists is worth noting. Cobden wrote privately: "The religious people who now tell us that we must hold India to convert it ought, I think, to be convinced by what has passed that sending red coats to Christianise a people is not the most likely way to insure the blessing of God on our missionary efforts." But he added: "I am aware that it is quite useless to preach these doctrines in the present temper of the people of this country, but if forced to appear in public to offer my opinion on the topics of the day, I could not ignore this greatest of all texts, and therefore I cling to my shell here (viz., in the country) because I know that this is not the moment to give utterance to my ideas with any chance of doing good." [5]

The Christian Socialists passed through a severe personal crisis because of the revolt. Charles Kingsley wrote to F. D. Maurice that his faith had been shaken by the Indian massacres. "The moral problems they involve make me half-wild.... What does it all mean? Christ is King nevertheless." [6] Maurice wrote to his friend, J. M. Ludlow: "The Indian news brings back all the questions to this age which the Lisbon earthquake forced upon the last." [7] What troubled Kingsley and Maurice was how God could have allowed his "Christian" people to be massacred by "heath-

* Not completely. Morley ignores the revolt in his *Life of Gladstone*. See criticism in Moneypenny and Buckle, *Life of Disraeli*, vol. I, 1895 Gladstone said in an address to Society of Foreign Missions at Chester, October 12, 1857 "I am bound to admit that for the last twenty five years I have observed grievous instances of policy in respect of our Indian Empire; measures undertaken without a shade of justice; and a perfect scandal to English history." *People's Paper*, October 17, 1857.

ens." Was it, as had been suggested at the time of the Lisbon disaster, a judgement for sin or was it an argument for atheism? After some painful thought the three friends retained their faith. Maurice found peace in the conviction that "there should be no accusations except of ourselves" and that "these should appear chiefly in acts meet for repentance",[8] and, in the *Five Sermons* he preached on *The Indian Crisis,* he expressed the view that "we must struggle to keep that Empire" of India.[9] Kingsley recovered from his panic but seems to have remained publicly silent, and Ludlow was soon writing that "with a happy and prosperous India.... with Saxon thews and sinews in the West and faithful Mussulman or Sikh... in the East, ready to be flung over the Indian ocean. . England may safely bid defiance to the world...."[10] Christian socialism was coming to terms with imperialism.

The East India Company had few friends left. "We all know," wrote Cobden, "the motive which took the East India Company to Asia—monopoly, not merely as towards foreigners, but against the rest of their own countrymen" and he denied that there was any advantage in maintaining the Company "which has shown itself capable of crimes, which would revolt any savage tribe of whom we read in Dr Livingstone's narrative and which had never seen a Christian or European till he penetrated among them."[11] The Indian Reform Society, which served as a forum for people of differing views—Ernest Jones, the Chartist, found it a useful platform—but was mainly the expression of those Manchester manufacturers who wished to build in India an alternative cotton supply to that from the United States, called for a curtailment of the Company's powers, and reforms both in the treatment of the natives and their taxation.[12] The *Weekly Dispatch,* which was directed towards diverting working class readers from revolt against to acceptance of the social and economic system, held that "it would be dastardly, it would be impious, were we to visit on the Hindoos and Mohammedans the inevitable retribu-

tion of their crimes, and to spare the European authorities whose misdeeds have led to these crimes."[13] It was very convenient to divert disquiet among the lower orders into hostility against the Company.* The *Daily Telegraph* attacked the Company as being the abandonment of government to "a single class."[14] The *Standard* coupled a recommendation that employers should give full wages to their workers on the mid-week Day of Fast and Intercession —a suggestion that does not appear to have been followed —with an attack on the Company.[15] The *Non-Conformist* attacked the Company;[16] and Lord Palmerston, who showed himself "very flippant and offhand in his views of Indian affairs... jumped to the conclusion that the Company must be extinguished."[17]

On the question of the "atrocities," Lord Shaftesbury was the most forthright exponent. "I myself saw a letter from the highest lady now in India," he declared "stating that day by day ladies were coming into Calcutta with their ears and their noses cut off, and their eyes put out... children of the tenderest years have been reserved... to be tortured in cold blood with the utmost refinement of imagination before the eyes of their parents, who were made witnesses of the cruelties and who were made to swallow portions of the flesh cut from the limbs of their children, and afterwards burnt over a slow fire."[18]

The reference to his informant clearly indicated Lady Canning, wife of the Governor-General. Later, under pressure, Lord Shaftesbury corrected himself. He admitted that he had not seen the letter himself but had heard of it.[19] There is no evidence that the letter was ever written.

Evidence that Lord Shaftesbury maintained his views in favour of reprisals is provided by a letter which he wrote to Martin Tupper a poet very popular at Buckingham

* It had also declared that "if we crushed the sepoys, God would be as well pleased as the Britons" August 23, 1857.

Palace—in addition to sonnets calling for the complete destruction of Delhi and the erection of "groves of gibbets" for the criminals, he suggested that the Queen should become Empress of India.[20] "I am much disposed to agree with you," wrote Shaftesbury, "that most people, when they ascribe 'vengeance' to God, hardly know the meaning they attach to the expression.... The truth is that 'vengeance' in scripture is the perfect and most sublime development of justice.... The sepoys are witnesses against themselves —no evidence is required to establish their guilt. Human authority is sufficient for their case; and it is in order that constituted authority and not private lynch law, may rule all proceedings. It is, I say, for this that we call on the Government to be stern, decided and vigorous in punishment."[21]

Cobden accepted the atrocity stories but wrote to John Bright: "It is clear that they (the Indians) cannot have been inspired with either love or respect by what they have seen of the English.... I find the common epithet applied to our fellow subjects in Hindostan is *nigger*.... All this might have been borne, though with difficulty, if the English with whom the natives came in contact displayed exalted virtues and high intellectual powers.... The deeds perpetrated by the British in times past, and still more bloody deeds now being enacted, and which will arise from our own original aggression upon distant and unoffending communities, will be visited with unerring justice upon us or our children.... To read the letters of our officers at the commencement of the outbreak it seemed as if every subaltern had the power to hang or shoot as many natives as he pleased and they spoke of the work of blood with as much levity as if they were hunting wild animals."[22] But these were private musings. Cobden and Bright had both been defeated at the general election of 1857. Cobden was ill during most of that year and never spoke publicly on the revolt. John Bright, seeking re-election to Parliament at a bye-election at Birmingham declared: "The success of the Indian revolt

would lead to anarchy in India and I conceive that it is a mercy to India to suppress it."[23]

F. D. Maurice told his congregation that "the forgiveness which does not hate crime and seek for the extinction of it, which shrinks from the punishment of the crime, is devilish forgiveness not divine."[24] Disraeli suspected (but he kept his suspicions for the private ear of Lady Londonderry) that "many of the details of the atrocities which have so outraged the sensibility of the country are manufactured."[25] Judex, the writer of a very long letter to *The Times*, in which he maintained the thesis that this had been exclusively a Hindu revolt, declared that "by far the greater part of the stories of dishonour and torture are pure inventions"[26] but this assessment came after the reprisals were under way, and is to be contrasted with other reports prominently displayed in that paper, extending in one instance to the limitless accusation: "I have by me many letters revealing cases of still greater atrocity but the sufferers or their relatives shrink from any disclosure of their names and circumstances."[27] The *Times* editorially, was among the foremost of those papers which called for "a terrible example... an example which shall be spoken of in the villages of British India for generations to come."[28] The Radical *Morning Star* followed a devious course, reflecting the electoral preoccupations of Bright and the commercial hopes of the Manchester school. It attacked Canning, not for his "clemency" but for his policies prior to the revolt, but it spoke against "vindictiveness," printed a letter protesting against the "proposed 3 day pillage of Delhi," and reminded its readers that "we must never forget that these very men (the rebels) have been employed while in our service in perpetrating similar deeds on others."[29] The *Non-conformist* agreed that "stern work will have to be done before order is restored and the supremacy of law re-established in India," but salved its conscience by adding: "But let what *must* be done be done in a Christian spirit and not in the rage of maddened passions."[30] The *Daily*

Telegraph declared that "the necessity of stern retribution and example was universally upheld." [31] The *Morning Post* declared that "Every Briton with the heart of a man in his bosom feels pledged to his country that the British Empire in India shall endure if for no other reason than for the purpose of exterminating and rooting out from the face of the earth the Mohammedan and Brahminised demons who have committed crimes on British women and maiden too horrible to name." [32] The Radical *Newcastle Chronicle*, now reflecting the growing imperialist fervour of its proprietor, Joseph Cowan, spoke of "this magnificent dependency of the British Crown" and criticised Canning's "clemency," saying: "It is no time for mercy now; our vengeance should be sharp and bloody, and of such a nature as to make our Indian subjects tremble in future at the name of Delhi ... (they should be) exterminated as if they were so many wild beasts." [33]

One final point regarding the British bourgeoisie needs to be mentioned, the broad imperial aspect, which, as has been shown by extracts already cited, coloured the conflicts of opinion.

There was great relief that the Revolt had not coincided with the Crimean War or the operations in Persia. "If it was to come," remarked *The Times*, "this revolt could not have occurred at a better time," and it declared that "the only question is who shall govern them (the Indians) for they will never be able to govern themselves" It pointed out that "since the Burmese war no insult had been offered to our power anywhere. Oudh has been annexed in peace, the Punjab changed to an attached province, even Peguh was beginning to pay." [34] Lord Shaftesbury commented also on "the favourable time at which the mutiny broke out" and concluded that "the finger of God has been working. All these things proved that we are yet reserved as a nation to advance the civilisation of those millions of the human race and to be agents in the promulgation of the Gospel of His Blessed Son." [35] Lord Brougham called for "severe

punishment."[36] Sir James Graham, who, after being a member of Lord Grey's Reform Cabinet, had now returned to Conservative views declared that "the loss of that empire would be the commencement of our downfall....the maintenance of it will prove that we have not degenerated."[37] The *Daily Telegraph* said: "The suggestions of timidity and of morbid sentimentality never creep into the councils of an empire unless in the period of decay; such a period we affirm has not yet arrived."[38] The *Non-Conformist*, reflecting "Little England" views, felt that "this mutiny perhaps is part of the penalty.... (for having allowed ourselves) to be dragged into Chinese hostilities and (having) allowed an English Minister....to prosecute war with Persia."[39] The *Newcastle Chronicle* spoke of Raleigh and Drake, and hoped that "centuries of prosperity and luxury have not sapped out of them (the English) that spirit of manly daring and contempt of danger which made famous the Englishmen of the Elizabethan Age."[40] The novelist, Trackeray, whose family fortune, lost by him at the gambling tables, had come from India, made the suppression of the revolt a prominent part of his programme as he tried unsuccessfully to persuade the electors of Oxford to return him to Parliament.[41] Disraeli used all his eloquence in the task of drawing closer the links between the Crown and India, foreseeing that those territories could not be governed by force alone but needed the reinforcement of the mystique of Royalty to enable the British connection to survive.[42] Queen Victoria found "the whole is so much more distressing than the Crimea—where there was *glory* and honourable warfare and where the poor women and children were safe."[43] She took the opportunity of pressing for an increase in the armed forces. "The Empire has nearly doubled itself," she wrote, "within the last twenty years and the Queen's troops have been kept at the old establishment,"[44] and she was encouraged by a letter from Canning: "The reputation of England's power, too, has had a rude shake, and nothing but a long continued manifestation of her might before the eyes

of the whole Indian Empire, evinced by the presence of such an English force, as shall make the thought of opposition hopeless, will re-establish confidence in her strength"[45] The Prince Consort derived similar hopes from the event. "What causes a thrill of horror is the thought of having to fire at our own uniform.... The general result may possibly be good....now we shall, no doubt, have recourse to a rational military system."[46] The effect on the international situation was also anxiously discussed.* Would Napoleon III take the opportunity of stabbing Britain in the back? Palmerston was cynically gratified when Belgium offered to send a contingent of troops to assist in the suppression of the revolt and from New York, where flags were flown at half-mast when Havelock died, there came reports that 50,000 volunteers could be raised with ease for the same purpose.[47]

It is, therefore, clear that even among the bourgeoisie the reaction took various forms. What of the British working class?

We cannot expect, of course, to find the same ample records, those letters from country rectories and country houses, those political diaries, parliamentary speeches and erudite editorials. We shall probably never know what was said in those places where the working men of England met and discussed the events of the day. The records are not available and probably do not exist. There are, however, indications of the reaction and further research may still have revelations to make.

In 1857, the militant movement of Chartism was dissolving under the impact of British commercial expansion. Socialism, which had originated among the British working class was suffering a temporary eclipse. As Engels wrote in 1885: "The French Revolution of 1848 saved the English middle-class. The Socialistic pronunciamentos of the victo-

* For the present we are reduced to the condition of an insignificant power (Greville, entry, October 2, 1857).

rious French workmen frightened the small middle-class of England and disorganised the narrower, but more matter-of-fact movement of the English working class.... Chartism (had) collapsed internally before even it collapsed externally on the 10th of April, 1848. The action of the working class was thrust into the background. The capitalist class triumphed all along the line."[48] There followed the twenty-five years' period when England was "the workshop of the world" and her supremacy was unchallenged. Coming as it did during that quarter of a century one cannot expect that the Indian revolt should produce a mass reaction among the British working class. It is more surprising that there was any reaction at all.

Reynold's Newspaper, representing a non-socialist working class standpoint, at once expressed sympathy with the rebels. On July 5, 1857, it wrote of "the commencement of that tremendous retribution, which, if there be justice in the world, the gigantic and unparalleled crimes of the British Government and East India Company are certain to evoke. .." It declared that "while deploring the excesses in which the revolted regiments have indulged, our sympathies as they always have been are with the weak against the strong—with the oppressed struggling with their tyrants —with the tortured, plundered, enslaved and insulted natives of India, in striving to free themselves of the iron yoke of their cruel, remorseless, rapacious and hypocritical masters ...*Our* sympathies are with the insurrectionists, with the mutinous scoundrels whom *The Times* and its colleagues wish to make an example of, by shooting, hanging and gibbeting." When the "atrocities" were blazoned abroad, the paper remarked: "We at home only hear one side of the question.... the provocation has been great."[49] It linked the events in India with the extinction of liberty at home.[50] When the "Mountebankism of the Fast Day" occurred, the paper commented on the behaviour of "the Church militant and mercenary" remarking that "the majority of the persons, in their discourses, were warlike and

revengeful; they asked for blood and money, but said very little about mercy." Particular reference was made to "Mountebank Spurgeon," the non-conformist spell-binder who preached to over 20,000 people in the Crystal Palace, all of whom had paid for the performance. "Spurgeon preached blood and, in order to excite the passions of his congregation, perverted fact and ignored history. He told them that the sepoys were rebels not patriots because they had voluntarily surrendered their liberties into the keeping of the English! Yes! they surrendered their liberties in the same fashion as a traveller does his purse with the highwayman's pistol levelled at him."[61] The denunciation was uncompromising, but it is also true that *Reynold's* was now beginning to succumb to the infection of imperialism. It was concerned with retaining India by reforming British management. "India will never be quieted and safe in our hands, unless we alter our policy of rapine, annexation and cruelty—and by letting the natives have a guarantee of mercy and justice in the future, disarm the frenzy of their despair and the resentment of the present. India may be a vast field for British enterprise and trade—if retained by England and the native population—and therefore it behoves the British people to see that no vile mismanagement and aristocratic guilt lose the last opportunity we have of retaining the golden garden of the east."[62]

Ernest Jones[53] had long been interested in India. He had written a series of newspaper articles in 1853,[54] and while in prison in 1851 had composed a long poem *The Revolt of Hindostan* or *The New World*, which was reissued when the revolt occurred. In its preface Jones makes his celebrated amendment to the Imperial slogan: "The British Empire on which the sun never sets." "On its colonies," he wrote, "the sun never sets, but the blood never dries."

Jones was now almost alone in carrying on the militant tradition of the Chartists. Soon he would himself give up the struggle and make his peace with the bourgeoisie. His

last fight—for the people of India—was a magnificent climax to his revolutionary career.

On July 4, Jones opened his campaign. "A policy of justice and conciliation might have long postponed the final rising of the men of Hindostan," he declared, and he warned: ". . . .You working men of England will be called on to bleed and pay for the maintenance of one of the most iniquitous usurpations that ever disgraced the annals of humanity. Englishmen! The Hindus are now fighting for all most sacred to men. The cause of the Poles, the Hungarians, the Italians, the Irish, was not more just and holy. . . you men of England will be called on to spend your blood and treasure in crushing one of the noblest movements the world has ever known. . . . Fellow countrymen! you have something better to do than helping to crush the liberties of others—that is, to struggle for your own."

On July 11, he referred hopefully to signs of fear among the ruling class. *The Times* City page had contained an alarmed comment: "A continued depression like that now prevaling in the stock market, in the face of the uninterrupted augmentation in the Bank bullion and the prospect of a great harvest, is almost unprecedented. The anxiety with regard to India overpowers all other considerations, and if any serious news were to arrive tomorrow, before the conclusion of the settlement, it would probably produce a panic." He also drew attention to the reception of the Queen of Oudh by Queen Victoria. "Why was an audience refused before? Because it was said the Queen of Oudh had been guilty of certain little peccadilloes, which shocked the tender morality of Buckingham Palace. Now the dethroned Queen is received, the moral scruples go to the winds and the dusky royalty hob-nobs with the pallid. The real state of the case is: money-jobbers had robbed a royal house of its inheritance (as vilely gotten as it was vilely inherited), and the sovereign of the money-jobbers' land, of course, sets her face against the Indian Queen. Now the money-jobbers stand a fair chance of being driven out of

their spoil and, accordingly, the Queen is induced to conciliate the royal wanderer, as the robbers hope she may be made an instrument and a tool."

On August 1, Jones wrote that "The revolt turns out to be, as we assured our readers from the commencement, not a military mutiny but a national insurrection," and he wrote hopefully that it appeared to show signs of careful preparation. "Is this merely 'a war with a monarch' such as we have had many of ? Far from it, this is a war with a people and one embracing greater numbers than any we have ever yet had warlike arbitration within India." He covered himself against these sanguine views by warning that "the insurgents may quarrel among each other; they may display unexpected imbecility of conduct.... Of one thing we are certain—that whether this insurrection be suppressed or not, it is the precursor to our loss of India.... Our advice is.... recognize the independence of the Indian race.... One hundred years (ago).... a foreign tribe, the pedlars of the earth, the merchant-robbers of Leadenhall Street, stole on a false pretence into the heart of this mighty galaxy of empires and robbed it of its jewel—independence.... Within that reign of 100 years a millenium of guilt has been compressed." He admitted that atrocities might have been committed by the rebels, but emphasised the provocation and recalled British military slaughters during the Peninsular War. "Did *The Times* inveigh then? No, not with a single word." He warned against the plan to "cast all blame" of Indian misrule on the East India Company. "To abolish the Company and substitute the Home Government is but substituting one plunderer for another." He declared again that "The Hindu cause is just—the Hindu cause is noble.... God save the Hindu cause." He listed reprisals described by *The Times* and commented: "There is a specimen of Christianity and civilization. Let none talk of Indian cruelty after this."

This same issue of the *People's Paper* also contained an interesting reflection of the attitude of the working clas

to the revolt. "About 200 non-commissioned officers and privates.... marching through the towns of Chatham and Rochester.... occasioned a great deal of attention, as they were a fine body of men. They have recently returned from India, having enlisted under the warrant for ten years' service, and therefore they claimed their free discharge, and notwithstanding the inducements held out to them, by the bounty of £2 and a new kit, they declined having anything more to do with the service."

On August 29, Jones made another survey of the military position. He was still hoping the revolt might be successful. He pointed out the effects of the struggle on "a highly artificial state of society which depends on credit, and wherein depends on quiet and security." Other nations would threaten British commercial supremacy and, "as an unavoidable result, dear food, low wages, and distress among the producing classes are the infallible sequence."

On September 5 he repeated that the revolt was "one of the most just, noble and necessary ever attempted in the history of the world.... The wonder is, not that one hundred and seventy million of people should now rise in part —the wonder is that they should ever have submitted at all. They would not, had they not been betrayed by their own princes, who sold each other to the alien.... Thus Kings, princes and aristocracies have ever proven the enemies and curses of every land that harboured them in every age." He emphasised that the English working people should have, "sympathy.... for their Hindu brethren. Their cause is yours—their success indirectly yours as well."

On September 12 he referred to "short time" as a result of the events in India, and made gloomy forecasts of the commercial outlook. "The expenses of putting down the Revolt would came from taxes—from the pockets of the English working classes." He asked: "Have the English working classes an interest in the payment of that money? Have they ever gained one iota of our Indian rule? Not they. Then who have been the gainers? The aristocrats

and plutocrats—the landlords and the moneylords—the young scions of the aristocracy who there learnt in the school of cruelty and lust of rapine and extortion....Have we not impoverished India since it belonged to England, ruined it, beggar'd it? What would the commerce, what would the market of India have been, had we traded there as a friendly power with friendly independent powers?"

In this article he also asked in a reference to atrocity stories: "Who is the torturer?" He quoted from an Irish newspaper evidence from the Commission for the investigation of alleged cause of torture at Madras, 1855.

On September 19 he answered suggestions that his attitude might be mistaken. "Democracy," he replied, "must be consistent. God is doubtlessly and man should be undeniably on the side of right and justice. No man can say: 'I am for Hungary and against India.' If he does he lies against himself, against principle, against truth, against honour. If it is 'un-English' to be on the side of the Hindhus, it is more 'un-English' to be on the side of tyranny, cruelty, oppression and invasion.... It is time that England change—or rather that England make her veritable voice be heard the voice of the English people—and cry: 'right is right and truth is truth.' The Hindhus have right on their side—be victory on their side as well. The English people are great and mighty enough to be just and consistent in their aspirations and acts"

On October 3 Jones wrote sarcastically on the forthcoming National Day of Fast and Intercession.* "The fast day was nothing better than a hypocritical solemnity only calculated to pinch the stomachs and bare the cupboards of the poor." He commented on the fact that the railway

* "The day was wet and dreary, and the labouring classes the only people who really fasted—not willingly but because they could not that day earn their daily bread—wandered disconsolately about the streets giving vent to exclamations that were exactly the opposite of prayer" (*Newcastle Chronicle*, October 9, 1857).

companies "announce excursion trains would run the same as on Sundays" thus giving the people the choice of "Spurgeon at the Crystal Palace or a trip to Greenwich." This issue also contained a letter over the signature "Time Tries All," which appears to have been written by Jones. It dealt with the Relief Fund in aid of the British victims of the revolt. "I emphatically declare it would be a crime on the part of the working man if he were to subscribe a single farthing on their behalf—you have no voice and interest in the diabolical system of plunder and deceit so treacherously carried on by a company of self-interested imbeciles and land sharks; let the subscriptions be confined to those who hold Indian scrip—Indian bonds—to those who have profited by the Indian invasion and robbery." He contrasted the treatment of the sufferers from the Crimean War with that now proposed for the Anglo-Indians, and referred to the large sums provided for the royal family and their marriages. "Just consider these princely magnificent fortunes with the starving lot bequeathed to the unfortunate decayed tradesmen of this country—the proletarian poor. Think, thrown into a bastille called a union-house, man and wife parted as soon as they enter, young children sent miles away, fed on skilly and weak broth, not fit for human food, according to reports from St Pancras workhouse last week". He concluded with an appeal to the working men to keep their money for political activity. "Look at home —look to your own interests—subscribe and organise."

On October 19 he dealt with the "atrocities," expressing his belief that they were "fearfully exaggerated." But "even if they were proved.... they must remember they had heard only one side," and they should recollect the British record in the American War of Independence when we "employed Indians and paid those Indians a fixed sum for every scalp of man, woman or child, they brought into the British camp....well knowing by what horrid torture the miserable victims had been put to death. That was not an act of the dark ages but perpetrated even within the

memory of living man," and he pointed out that the "British in India.... have invented a mode of death so horrible that humanity shudders at the thought. They, the merciful Christians.... have hit on the refined expedient of tying living men to the mouths of cannons, and then firing them off, blowing them to atoms, scattering a rain of blood—a shower of quivering fragments of human flesh and intestines on the bystanders. Such an act a Nero never surpassed. It is a destruction of the human body which Churchmen tell us is made in the image of the Deity!"

On October 31 he again dealt with the question of the "atrocities," saying that "the conduct of the 'rebels' throughout the mutiny has been in strict and consistent accordance with the example of their civilised governors."

On November 14 he made a fresh "acknowledgement of the heroic bravery of the Hindhu force." On November 21 he pointed out that "Blood breeds blood and cruelty begets cruelty." On December 5 he tried to persuade his readers that they need not yet despair of the Hindu cause, but his hopes of a successful blow against British imperialism was now beginning to fade. His references to the revolt became less frequent.* On April 3, 1858, he wrote of "the final struggle between Indian patriotism and British aggression," but his reference on April 10 to his hope for the "success of our Hindhu brethren" was based on future and not immediate prospects. "At some not far distant period," he wrote, "the development of Indian greatness will be found most consistent with India's freedom from British rule, and its thorough, uncontrolled and unshackled independence." On May 1, he declared that "India is lost to England" whatever the result of the revolt and on May 8, he wrote that "If we want to reconquer India, we must do so with the olive, as much as with the sword. The people remember the past and, as far as we are concerned, dread the future. They remember that we tore them from pos-

* He was also preoccupied with organising a Chartist Conference

session of their land; they remember that a nation of freeholders had the soil confiscated and were forced to rent from us what had been theirs in fee simple from immemorial time. They remember that their lands were taxed, beyond the power of payment; that then they were forced to mortgage their implements of husbandry; again to dispose of their seed corn, and thus made beggars, to pay the dues exacted by the British Government. They remember that then, when agriculture became impossible, they sought to relinquish their farms, because they were unable to cultivate them, but were actually compelled to pay taxes for the land they never tilled. When unable to borrow the amount from friends, they remember how they were tortured—how they were hung by the soles of their feet in the burning heat of day; or by the hair of the head with stones attached to their legs; how wedges of sharp wood were forced up their nails—how father and son were tied together and lashed at the same time, that the sufferings of the one might aggravate the pain of the other; how the women were flogged—how scorpions were tied to the breasts of the latter, and red chilly forced into their eyes. They remember these things as proved in the Madras Petition in the Government Commissioners' reports and in the British House of Lords and Commons. They remember how a police was let loose upon them, so badly paid, that they had to support themselves by robbery; they, the guardians of law forced to be thieves—and that this system was connived at.... by the British Government." On June 12 he wrote that "the golden link of sympathy is snapped asunder —blood and steel can never more unite what bad government, what cruelty and extortion have separated by a gulf as wide as that now yawning between England and her Asiatic Empire." On June 19 he repeated his contention that "the entire people is against us."

The later stage of the revolt coincided with increasing financial difficulties for the *People's Paper*. In June, 1858, it succumbed and although Jones, for a time, had a plat-

form in the succeeding *London News* this paper was always in difficulties, became a far less militant paper and soon petered out altogether. It contained, however, some articles by Jones in defence of the Indian people. His last article appeared on August 15, 1858, when he dealt with the new situation of India under the India Bill, which transferred responsibility for its management from the Company to Parliament. Formerly the Company, he pointed out, stood between India and public opinion. "All this, however, is now changed, at least in hypothesis, and practically also. There is no doubt that public opinion, if intelligently and energetically exercised, may now make itself much more powerfully felt than ever it has before in the affairs of India. But will it do so? Will the great body of people recognise and appreciate the responsibility they have incurred?" Careful study and eternal vigilance would be needed. The first step was "to stop the system of sanguinary and indiscriminate severity practised on the natives of India, or rather we should say the English residents there, for they do not settle, but merely go to get what they can out of the poverty of the people."

Jones not only wrote articles. He addressed meetings On August 12, 1857, he spoke at "one of the largest meetings ever held in St. George's Hall, London."[55] In December, he spoke at St. Martin's Hall. "Let it not be supposed for one moment," he said, "that he sanctioned the mode by which our Indian rule had been acquired, or the conduct by which it had been retained. He considered it from beginning to end one of the blackest crimes in the annals of a civilised country."[56] In January, 1858, he spoke at a meeting at the London Tavern, at which the old Chartist, John Frost, was refused a hearing when he said that "if they took the power out of the hands of the East India Company and gave it to the Government they would put it in the hands of much-worse men."[57] He also spoke at Birmingham in April, 1858[58] and there were open-air meetings in Copenhagen Fields, the site of the present Smithfield Meet Market.

of which a memory has been recorded. "I walked from a distant part of London, through miles of streets to hear him It was during the Indian Mutiny. The old fervour and the old eloquence were still to be noted. But the pinched face and the threadbare garments told of trial and suffering. A shabby coat buttoned close round the throat seemed to conceal the poverty which a too faithful adherence to a lost cause had reduced him."[50]

The cause was not lost, only temporarily defeated. The British working class was to pass through a period of collaboration with its masters, picking up the crumbs which fell from their well-laden tables as they exploited half the world: the Indian people were to pass through nearly a century of foreign rule before obtaining independence. It is worth recalling in this centenary year of the revolt that the voice of the British working class was not silent in the hour of agony and defeat.

NOTES

1 Entry, May 1, 1857.
2 December 2, 1857.
3 October 7, 1857.
4 October 8, 1857.
5 John Morley, *Life of Cobden*, vol. II, p. 205. Letter to Ashworth, October 16, 1857.
6 *Charles Kingsley: His letters and memoir of his life*, ed. by his wife, vol. II, pp. 34-5. Kingsley to Maurice, September 3, 1857.
7 September 21, 1857.
8 *Ibid.*
9 F. D Maurice *The Indian Crisis: Five Sermons*, p. 10.
10 J. M. Ludlow, *Thoughts on the Policy of the Crown towards India*, 1859, p. viii.
11 Morley, *op. cit.*
12 S. Macoby *English Radicalism*, vol. 2, p. 366.
13 August 23, 1857.
14 October 7, 1857.

15 October 9, 1857.
16 September 16, 1857.
17 *Greville Diary*, ed., Philip Witwell Wilson, vol. II, p. 563.
18 Wimborne, October 30, 1857.
19 *The Times*, January 7; February 4, 1858.
20 Derek Hudson, *Martin Tupper: His Rise and Fall*, p. 185.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 186. Shaftesbury to Tupper, November 10, 1857.
22 Morely, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23 G. M. Trevelyan, *Life of John Bright*, p. 261.
24 F. D. Maurice, op. cit., p. 11.
25 House of Commons, July 27, 1857.
26 January 29, 1858.
27 February 4, 1858.
28 August 6, 1857.
29 September 29; October 5; October 7, 1857.
30 October 6, 1857.
31 October 8, 1857.
32 September 5, 1857.
33 July 17; August 7; October 23, 1857.
34 June 27; June 30; July 27, 1857.
35 *The Times*, November 2, 1857.
36 Penrith, October 29, 1857.
37 *Weekly Despatch*, August 23, 1857.
38 June 29, 1857.
39 July 1, 1857.
40 November 20, 1857
41 *Weekly Despatch*, July 26, 1857.
42 House of Commons, July 27, 1857.
43 Queen Victoria to King Leopold, September 2, 1857.
44 Queen Victoria to Lord Panmure, June 29, 1857.
45 Lord Canning to Queen Victoria, July 4, 1857.
46 Prince Albert to Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, July 26, 1857.
47 *The Times*, August 19, 1857.
48 *London Commonweal*, March 1, 1885.
49 July 26, 1857.
50 December 6, 1857.
51 October 11, 1857.
52 *Ibid.*
53 See *Ernest Jones: Chartist*. Selections from the writings and speeches of Ernest Jones with introduction and notes by John Saville.
54 *People's Paper*, May 7, 14, 21, 28; June 11, 18, July 2, 1853.
55 *Ibid.*, August 15, 1857.
56 *Ibid.*, December 19, 1857.
57 *Ibid.*, January 23, 1857.
58 *Ibid.*, April 10, 1858.
59 W. E. Adams, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p 230 quoted by Saville, *op. cit.*

Contemporary French Press

CHARLES FOURNIAN

IT IS NO EASY TASK to write about the reactions of the French public to the 1857 revolt. Firstly, it should be remembered that France at that time was under an authoritarian imperial regime, without the right to hold public meetings, a shackled press among which there were some republican organs of different political views but none representing the working-class viewpoint. Secondly, news from India was meagre, and such news as did come was either from British sources or from French settlers in India Even these did not keep pace with the actual course of events. For instance, it was only at the end of June that French journals carried news of the May revolt. On top of this, knowledge about India was very meagre With few exceptions, studies on India in France at that time were confined to repeating the old traditional cliches about the riches of India, her gods, her Asiatic mentality, etc. It appears that the French scholars considered India, the exclusive preserve of their British colleagues. At least, this is the only conclusion one can arrive at after going through the section of the National Library devoted to Asia as well as the contents of the *Review on Historic Questions*. Books on India in appreciable quantity only began to appear from the first decade of the twentieth century.

However, the French press did devote a great deal of attention to the 1857 revolt. For instance *Le Siecle*, a liberal journal, wrote on September 9, 1857: "The insurrection in India is the sole big event which can attract attention at this moment."

Despite all its diversity the French press was almost unanimous on certain points, e.g., on condemning the ferocity of British repression.

Le Siecle, accused of being pro-English, wrote on November 17, 1857: "It is unfortunately confirmed that a frightful carnage followed the capture of Delhi.... We do not hesitate to brand these acts of barbarism which cannot be justified by any of the crimes of the Sepoys." *L'Estaffette*, a republican paper, indignantly declared on August 29, 1857: "If the English persist in their cruel oppressive policy, the Great Powers, and France above all, will have to intervene to see that the Indians are not slaughtered as though they were a vile herd."

The French press also unanimously denounced the misdeeds of the East India Company and the methods of British colonialists, which they felt were mainly responsible for the revolt. The prudent *Reveu des Deux Mondes* wrote: "The Company is little concerned with easing the yoke. During the last ten years particularly, it has practised on the largest scale, a system of annexations, of dispossessions, of confiscations. It has reversed the system of land tenure, and rendered meaningless all formal agreements." *L'Estaffette* wrote much more strongly: "Does India remain a colony under the detestable English domination? No, the English have made of it an immense prison, strewn with gallows and gibbets." Specifically Fonveille attacks the British missionaries for their zeal in Christianising India and concludes "They are beginning to understand in England that the imprudence of the missionaries has contributed greatly to the present explosion."

The French press generally propagate dthe idea that Britain had been hard hit by the revolt and would suffer immense moral and material loss. Typical is the comment of *L'Union*: "Great Britain will inevitably see lowered the preponderant role she has played in world affairs for the last fifty years." Jonquiere Antonelle, in the *Revue de Paris* enlarged on the picture: "British influence is diminish-

ing in Constantinople, she is threatened in Suez. · In Persia she is involved in an armed peace which threatens war. She is found odious in China. In India she is crumbling and from that time, the whole of Turkey has been rejoicing. The entire East disgraces England."

Apart from stressing economic and racial solidarity with Britain, all these different organs of French bourgeois opinion believed that colonial tutelage was necessary for the well-being of the Indian people who, they thought, were considered incapable of governing themselves.

This attitude of solidarity found expression in the official drive for subscription on behalf of the British victims of the Indian revolt launched under the patronage of the Prefect of Police, as well as by a panegyric to the East India Company by Montalambert. In addition *Le Pays* wrote in September 1857: "The end of the British Empire in India would signify the triumph of barbarism over civilisation." The *Journal des Debats* on October 9, 1857, expressed the hope that ("in the sole interest of civilisation"), "Great Britain will triumph in this terrible crisis."

The criticisms which these orthodox journals expressed of Britain were, thus, not born out of a sympathy for the sepoys. These criticisms were partly the reflection of French opinion which was scarcely sympathetic towards England. On October 2, 1857, the *Journal Des Debats* wrote of "a sort of unpopularity which appears to be attached at this moment to England." Then there was the rancour against England which found expression in the talk about Dupleix, which was quite widespread at this time. Moreover, the fact that France at this time possessed only one big colony—Algeria—made it easier for French journals to criticise colonialism in general.

The official papers in general were, however, anxious to preserve the alliance with England. Prevost Paradol wrote on November 9, 1857, in the *Journal Des Debats*: "England is our ally. We must not, therefore, profit by her difficulties at the risk of breaking the alliance." In the

liberal papers one could find declarations of a paternalist humanism in favour of the colonial peoples, who were considered "inferior brothers." The legitimist Catholic press had no sympathy for the Indians but saw in the 1857 revolt a blow against Protestant England.

The French democrats denounced with more fervour than the moderate or reactionary papers the crimes of the British before the revolt and during its suppression. Further, in contrast to the moderate journals which seriously believed the British canard that the revolt had been engineered by Russian agents, the democrats of *Revue de Paris* or *L'Estaffette* observed: "It is confirmed that the religious question was no more than a pretext. The real cause is a general resurgence of nationalism" (October 3, 1857).

And polemising against the *Journal des Debats*, the same journal wrote: "The question is not to find out whether all the Indians are more or less civilised, more or less united but to establish whether the last insurrection had been provoked by the excesses of the agents of the Company or whether this revolt is truly national."

Criticising *Le Siecle* which was affirming that after the departure of the English, the Indians would start fighting each other, *L'Estaffette* retorted: "It is the business of the Indians. In any case, it is surprising that a democratic journal should vaunt the virtues of foreign domination."

This solid principled position rested, besides, on a more serious knowledge of Indian historical reality than that of other papers, first of all of British imperialism. Take, for instance, the following: "England must have money. Here is the reason why and how Britain has conquered. Thus, the annexations, which have mortified India, leads the English towards Persia to war with her. Thus, the production of India where certain provinces are fields of poppies, puts England in contact with China—we know what kind of contacts. Thus, the successive invasions of the Anglo-Indian empire, throws England face to face with the Russian

Empire" (H. de Jonquiere Antonelle, *Revue de Paris*, 1857, *Affaire des Indes*).

In like fashion, *L'Estaffette* denounces the lie largely put out by the moderate journals that it would be to the interest of the whole of Europe, to have British domination over India maintained. "If the British lose India, will this rich country escape from Europe? If the Indian people recover their independence, they will hasten to enter into relations with the European powers, who would then establish their agencies along the whole coastline and would easily develop commercial relations with the interior. There would be no more domination and the Indians would administer themselves as they saw fit."

Thus the French democrats of 1857 albeit with some lack of precision had already passed a clear judgement on British imperialism and its ravages.

Of especial importance in this connection is the work of Fonvielle and L. Legault, *The Indian Mutiny* (1858), from the introduction of which an extended quotation is worth reproducing:

"Three great interests seek and find their satisfaction in India—that of the Company, of commerce in general and of the aristocracy. What do they leave after them for civilisation?

"The Company, overflowing with the extension of its conquests, ruined by the costs of occupation, has only one case, the collection of taxes. Since for it, all ways of acquiring more for its coffers are good and justified, it ends up by being hated, and being conscious of this hate, it is obliged to push on to the point of stupidity, as the guarantee for its domination. From this then, there is not, nor can there be any progress to be hoped for. From this deed, civilisation is a bad thing, without compensation.

"Commerce is also quite sterile from the point of view of welfare. In India, there is not even that mobility which elsewhere gives to its lowest agents the benefits of certain

contacts and a kind of emancipation by the growth of contacts and new relations. The entire energies of the masters is focused on the production of a commodity, which is neither sold, exchanged nor consumed within the country—of opium, uniquely destined to balance the price of exports from China. That is to say, Britain buys in this country far more tea and silk than she can make them accept of her woollens, cotton goods and iron-mongery and unwilling to make up the difference in money or in ingots, the poppy of India is there to fill up the gap. A hundred million men will be constrained to stupefy and exhaust themselves in order to produce a drug which will serve to poison a hundred million others.

"Here is the civilising morality of British commerce in India....

"The Company is coming to a stop; it is providing to impecunious families, in its administration, and its armies, many posts whose high salaries assure to its noble clientele, a position worthy of its rank and often a brilliant and quick fortune...."

In like manner, the French democrats were the only ones to give some authentic information of the Indian movement.

Jonquiere Antonelle insists on the idea that the democratic forces that existed in India in 1857 were essentially the commune (panchayat), the municipality, which has subsisted under the feudal regime, was inherited from the epoch of the great Moghuls and retained by the English. According to him, it is these forces which give the hope of victory for the insurgents.

Elsewhere, the same author in a letter to *L'Estaffette* wrote:

"There is a young India, as there is a young France and a young Germany. Young India professes civil and political freedom, religious tolerance in a sort of monotheism. The principles from which this young India has arisen are those

of the 18th and early 19th centuries of Europe. A contemporary of that time, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, then made a journey to philosophical England and philosophical and revolutionary France. He brought back from them a profession of faith."

Fonvielle in the introduction to the book cited above give us the essentials of this profession of deist faith:

"Such is my faith and that of my brothers, the members of the Brahmo-Samaj Society.

"Such is my faith taught by the venerable Raja Ram Mohan Roy, our master and founder.

"Call it Christianity, Islamism, deism; I do not care about the name."

It is again the same author (the only one, it would appear) who pointed to the practice of passive resistance. He recounts how, as a form of protest, before the revolt, 300,000 people assembled near Banaras renouncing all food and chanting imprecations. He concludes: "This example of passive opposition is indicative of what active opposition would be like with people of such calibre."

Finally, the French democratic organs in contrast to all other journals, exalted the figure of Nana Sahib. In the course of the month of September 1857, *L'Estaffette* many times eulogised him: "The leader of the Indian mutiny combines a tested courage with great skill in strategy.... Nana Sahib has made himself the avenger of his people.

"Nana Sahib, the chief of the mutineers whom some present as a ferocious beast, others as a perfect gentleman, was, we think, acting under the double inspiration of patriotism and religion, those two great incentives to human activity."

From this clear position, supported by greater information as compared to that of other French journals, the democratic journals drew a corresponding attitude.

They threw back the accusations of criminal cruelties hurled against the sepoys. "However cruel may have been the conduct of the sepoys, it is only the reflection in a con-

centrated form, of the cruelty of the English for the greater part of the century" (*L'Estaffette,* August 31, 1857).

"Once and for all, speak no more to us of the cruelties committed by the insurgents. Their cruelties are the fatal denouncement of the lamentable drama in which the English name up to this day, played the premier role" (*Ibid.,* September 20, 1857).

They took a firm stand against reports of French intervention to help the English in their repression. Certain sections to the left and the right, had declared that France must intervene and profit from the situation to demand from England restitution and compensation. To this clamour of reaction *L'Estaffette* of August 25, 1857, replied:

"Even in admitting of the eventuality of restitution and compensation, we do not very well see how France could become the auxiliary of England against the Indians, who are insurgents only in order to regain their national independence."

But the letters from readers demanded much more. One reader wrote:

"Intervene in favour of the Indians, launch all our squadrons on the seas, join our efforts with those of Russia, make an appeal to all the peoples of Asia, arm them, send them against British India, chase out the oppressors, re-establish the empire of the great Moghul—such is the only policy truly worthy of the glorious traditions of France."

Another saluted the freedom movement of Asia:

"Who knows whether all the people of India will not rise to chase out the English. If these eventualities are reached, France would have a great role to play on the banks of the Ganges, in making herself the protector of a vast confederation of Indian nations."

This enthusiasm often expressed itself in picturesque terms. Jonquiere Antonelle wrote in a letter: "You do not know at what point I will become a sepoy." And without equivocation, *L'Estaffette,* wrote (September 11,

1857): "We have said so before and we repeat: Our sympathies are with the Indians because love of the motherland, of national independence are things sacred for us."

The sympathy of French democrats for the Indian revolt is, therefore, very clear. However, the expression of this sentiment was considerably constrained by a shackled press under the open Napoleonic dictatorship—which deprives us of the knowledge of direct manifestations of the reactions of the working class.

Besides the democrats, it appears that large sections of French opinion showed themselves more or less favourable to the revolt. However, one must ask whether these reactions do not reflect more the profound hostility that many Frenchmen nurtured against England, rather than actual sympathy for the rebellious Indians. This was evidently the case with the Catholic journals. Whatever else may have been the case, the majority party of the bourgeoisie was solidly with England, by community of interests and by racial prejudice.

Echoes Of 1857 In Italy

LILIANA DALLE NOGARE

In order to place the Italian comments and judgements on the Indian rebellion of 1857 in its proper perspective, it is necessary to begin with a few observations on the situation in Italy at that time.

In 1857, Italy was passing through one of the most critical stages of her resurgence as a unified and independent nation. She had not yet achieved her unification and was divided into several states. The moderate party, which was one of the two great fighting organizations that voiced Italian national aspirations, for the unity and independence of the country, represented the richest elements of the Italian bourgeoisie and the aristocrats. They were, however, considerably influenced by the fear of the social aspirations of the artisans, workers and the peasantry and consequently refrained, as far as possible, from participating in the popular mass struggles The moderates were thus working for nationalist aims not through a national and popular revolution, but rather through the diplomatic game of exploiting the growing conflict between France and Austria. The moderates also relied on the possible support that Piedmont could receive from England which was interested in having, in the heart of the Mediterranean, a pro-British and anti-Austrian and eventually, an anti Russian State. An enlarged Piedmont on the coast of Austria in North Italy, fitted in well with this plan. Above all, Count Cavour, the initiator of the moderate policy, counted upon England.

On the other hand, the democrats who, in general, fol-

lowed the orientation and ideas of Joseph Mazzini, thought that the national aspiration should be achieved only with the participation of the people. (For Mazzini, it may be remembered, the expression "the people" meant only the lower strata of the urban population. Those who did not own land in the countryside did not fall in this category.)[1]

The democratic programme was substantially republican in character. The democrats were, therefore, opposed to Piedmont functioning as the leading state, a role assigned to it by the moderates. The democrats maintained that the process of the formation of a united modern Italian state should be achieved not through the diplomatic combinations and manoeuvres, but by a national revolutionary upsurge of the people.

It was in 1857 that the Italian democrats made a supreme effort to seize power. It was the year of the "expedition of Sapri," a revolutionary movement launched by the social democrat, Carlo Pisacane, in collaboration with Joseph Mazzini, to rouse the people of the south[2] against the reactionary Bourbon government and to initiate from the south the movement for unification. The failure of this attempt and the crisis it caused inside the democratic movement, strengthened the moderate trend and in consequence, helped, the Piedmontese monarchy to defeat Austria with the help of Napoleon III of France and thus initiated the process of unification that was completed in 1860 by Joseph Garibaldi's expedition of "The Thousand."

In these circumstances the moderates took up a clearly pro-British position. In their eyes the British parliamentary system was a model on which the Italian political institutions were to be built. English support was also regarded as essential to counteract Austrian influence. The strengthening of the British colonial position was considered as a positive factor favourable to Italian politics.

Among the democrats, on the contrary, although the British parliamentary system received approbation,[3] there was a widespread feeling of opposition and criticism of the

colonial policy of England based on oppression and exploitation. For, the democrats who cherished above all the principle of national liberty, the colonial system appeared as the very antithesis of these beliefs since it had many features in common with the policy of national suppression practised by Austria in Italy.

The democratic circles were, therefore, sympathetic to Indian national aspirations. Carlo Cattaneo, the author of *L'India Antica e Moderna* (India, Ancient and Modern)[4] was the most authoritative representative of contemporary democratic thought in Italy. In his study, which was both erudite and passionate, Cattaneo, after criticising the exploitation by the East India Company and "the venomous morals propagated by it," foresaw clearly the coming emancipation of the "courageous and intelligent" Indian people. He wrote: "The blind force of events can, contrary to the wishes of the oppressors, prepare a different course of opinion and action. The seeds of emancipation have taken root in India since those days so that the enslaved Brahmin may become the prince and assign to his master the place of a slave."[5]

Some years later polemizing against those who said that England should be counted upon for the Italian national cause, Felix Orsini, a well-known republican who was later to make an attempt on the life of Napoleon III, said in one of his letters to the revolutionary, Nicola Fabrizi: "One speaks of England, for example, in connection with the ideas of liberty and independence. Illusions. So long as these are in her interest she has sympathy. But it disappears as soon as that interest is no more there. Do you want some proof of the generosity of other nations? Make a rebellion in Corsica, Malta and the Ionian isles, the French and the British will take no risk but shoot. They will do what Hainau has done in Hungary; they will hang the people."[6]

Many more testimonies of this kind could be quoted. We consider it enough to mention here the judgement of another republican, Antonio Martinati, a follower of Mazzini,

who in his article *Risposta al Programma di un partito nazionale* (Reply to the Programme of a National Party) wrote:[7] "Are we talking of European diplomacy? I have had enough of it. Speak up clearly and honestly. You mention England. Will her offer be so sincere and cordial? Her interests, will these get along with our rights? Let England withdraw her Lord High Commissioner and the protective naval guard from the Ionian isles. Let her grant Malta her demands. Let her pay back the millions extorted by her from China. Let her quit the East and West Indies. Then alone we shall have faith in her; then alone we shall believe that her offers are disinterested and that her interests will not prejudice our rights. We want nothing from the power that oppresses and starves Ireland, and will be prepared to starve mankind for a pound of cotton or a tin of tea."

Keeping in mind the pro-English attitude of the Italian moderates one should not be surprised that, confronted with the Indian rebellion of 1857, they assumed an attitude of open sympathy and support for England's policy of repression.[8] Joseph Massari, who was closely associated with Cavour's policy, writing in the *Rivista Contemporanea* (Contemporary Review) of Turin[9] in July 1857, showed an absolute lack of understanding of the national character of the revolt of the sepoys. "Far too many people," he wrote, "confusing races and geography, will imagine that the Indian rebellion is a bid for independence and an indication of the aspiration to form an Indian nation. But those who can think and are familiar with the real state of affairs will not fall into such gross blunder. The sepoy rebellion is purely an act of military sedition, kindled by the religious fanaticism of the Brahmins: the desire for independence and liberty has got nothing to do with it."[10]

It is interesting to note that in the Catholic camp the Indian rising was used as an instrument to polemise against England. The *Civilita Cattolica* (Catholic Polity), the principal organ of the Jesuits, used British repression in

India to argue that if it was right for the British to crush by force a national upsurge in a territory under their control, it would be as right for the Italian government to suppress the people under its own rule.[11]

The democrats took, however, a pro-Indian stand from the very beginning. No sooner precise information on the scope and the nature of the Indian rebellion arrived, than the democratic press openly expressed its sympathy and admiration for the Indian revolutionaries.

Significant, in this connection, are the observations of the most important republican journal of that period, the *Italia del Popolo* (People's Italy) of Genoa.[12] In its issue of July 8 the journal wrote: "England seems to have no other thought than that of India, so much has she been touched to the quick by the rebellion. Her system of liberty at home and slavery abroad led to the loss of her best provinces in America in the last century, and now, let us see, what happens in India. She will probably be able to pacify and quench in blood this first great attempt at emancipation by that unfortunate people. But the blow has been struck, the fire kindled, and in any case, we apprehend, this may not be the end of it. What will become of England without India? Tyre, Carthage and Venice each has an answer to give. In order to avoid such a fate England will make every effort in Asia and descend to the lowest depths in Europe."[13]

Later on, in an editorial on August 17, which contained a rather circumscribed estimate of the national content of the Indian rebellion and an overestimation of the religious aspects of the movement, the journal came out with a severe verdict on England's work in India. "It is said, even according to the testimony of her own statesmen, that England herself makes use of such repressive methods in India of which, out of brazen hypocrisy, she reproached Ferdinand Bourbon in Europe. Through treachery, fraud and violence she occupied the states of the King and the princes who are her friends and allies. She extends loans in order to

violate contracts. To occupy unjustly the territory of others, she does not refrain from fomenting cruel enmities between brother and brother, between father and son, between son and mother. In short, she has brought upon her head the curses of 150 million people whose voice, though that of barbarians and non-Christians, will ascend to the throne of God to demand vengeance and receive it."[14]

The national character of the Indian rebellion is, however, resolutely affirmed in an interesting article published in the same journal on 15 September. In this article, the author strongly refutes the opinion, which was then current among journalists, that the Indian uprising was a purely military movement: "Mutineers assassinate their officers, plunder and then disperse—some of them in order to return to their countries and some to form themselves into robber bands. But over one hundred native regiments enter into a conspiracy here and revolt on a fixed date; they seize the ancient capital, declare war on the foreigners, proclaim national independence and elect a ruler of royal descent; they send out manifestos and strive for a new order; they meet with the sympathy of the population or at least neutrality—all this reveals a profound upsurge in the feelings of all classes and a complicity which though not manifested everywhere in deeds, is nevertheless present in intention."[15] What follows is marked by a farsighted understanding of the great importance which the Indian rebellion had for the entire Asian world. "However rapid or slow, complete or partial, may be the restoration of the British Empire in India, this is true forever that the appearance of the spectre of revolution on the banks of the Yellow River and the Ganges is a tremendous event, and in any case an indication of a new *élan* of the spirit of liberty."

In conclusion the events in India are cited to prove the validity of revolutionary action in Italy, too: "The prestige of British omnipotence has received a terrible blow. The party of action has predicted since long, both in words and by example, that despotism does not abdicate

voluntarily and that it is not by means of papers and books, but through deeds and at the cost of constant sacrifice, that a people marching on the road of progress conquer piece by piece that great and manly toga of liberty with which it will invest itself one day. It is about a hundred years now that the demand has been raised in books and journals as well as in the British Parliament for justice to the poor Indians, and Clive, Warren Hastings and the myriads of ruthless exploiters who fleece and torture this unfortunate country, condemned. Nevertheless, spoliation and torture still continue. It must be said that the English alone are not to be blamed. Oppression, when it concerns a people, is a horribly complex fact which is composed of two perfectly equal parts—the violence and injustice done by the oppressors and the servility and cowardice of the oppressed. When I am told that 36 million Frenchmen groan under the yoke of a dictator, that 25 million Italians are martyrized by Austria, the Bourbons and the Pope, and that over one hundred million Indians are slaves of a company of merchants, I cannot but say that the blame for such a great monstrosity falls on the millions of Italians, Indians and Frenchmen who suffer it rather than on their masters who, taken together, have after all a strength of only one million soldiers to enforce obedience with. And it is an established fact of history that an attitude of patience and callousness to slavery is the principal cause of the continuation and the severity of servitude. There is not a single particle which man did not need to wrest by force from those who wield usurped authority: the constitutions of 1848 including that of Piedmont were not inspired by (abstract) principles, nor by respectful petitions, nor by the jeremiads of philanthropists and the syllogism of rationalists, but by the awe-inspiring upsurge of raging slaves. The freedom of press in Piedmont, as well as her liberty itself, of which the haughtily detached sophists of horny problems and mean scribblers make such use in order to preach cowardly patience, is what they owe to the revolution which is rejec-

ted by them and to the violent action of the rebellious slave whom they ungratefully curse....Something more than mere petitions and parliamentary eloquence is needed to prove that the British rule has been grievous and its yoke intolerable: What is required is action by the slave as it found its expression in this formidable uprising."

Besides the views of the Mazzinist republicans whose organ was *Italia del Popolo,* it is also useful to mention the interpretation of the Indian events by *la Ragione* (Reason),[10] an Italian journal edited by Ausonio Franchi, founder of the rationalist movement of free thought. The "Political Review" of August 15 reads "The oppressed have learned how to approach and how to scald the oppressors. We greet with joy the day when India will be freed from the rule of the 'most free' England." In reply to English journals which, infuriated by the defeat suffered by the British troops during the siege of Delhi, suggested outrageous acts of vengeance against the insurgents, *la Ragione* wrote on September 5: "But this terrible lesson should have lifted the siege rather than destroy Delhi. Almost all English journals in their indignation at such a fierce revolt speak like the *Times* of a campaign of vendetta and extermination against the unhappy oppressed people who wanted to break for ever the chains of their slavery. We, who hold the sacred right of the peoples more dear than the triumph of self-interest, ardently wish that the English race may be driven out of India for ever. The British government in India is perhaps the most inhuman that exists on earth. One should not, therefore, wonder at the acts of reprisal by the natives against the Europeans. The East India Company has exploited and reduced to misery this very rich and fertile country where every year the Government looks on indifferently at millions and millions of souls perishing in famine because philanthropic England, which extracted so many millions, has made (Indian) industries disappear without setting up a single beneficial establishment. India which was once well governed by the Mussalmans, is now

horribly ruled by Christians."

From what has been presented above, one can understand that the Indian events of 1857 were followed with great attention in the Italian political circles. Moreover, the numerous publications on India which came out in that period,* are an eloquent testimony of the interest aroused by the Indian rebellion in Italy.

* Among the most significant works we should like to mention the following: G. B. Di Crollalanza, *L'impero Indo-Britannico e la sua potenza militare* (1857); Aristide Calani, *Scene dell' insurrezione Indiana* (1858); Guiseppe Lazzaro, *Della Compagnia e della dominazione inglese nelle Indie fino alla caduta di Delhi nel* 1858 (1858); Ignazio Persico, *Relazione sulla insurrezione dell' India Britannica* (1858); ed Warren, *L'India inglese prima e dopo l'insurrezione del* 1857 (1858); Ferdinando de Lanoye, *L'India contemporanea* (1858); Giovanni Flecchia e Constantino Marmocchi, *L'Impero Anglo-Indiano: Deschizione geografica, storica, etc.* (1862),

NOTES

1 For the extreme inadequacy of the attitude of the Mazzinists on the agrarian question in Italy, see, above all, the analysis of Antonio Gramsci, *Risorgimento*, Turin (Einandi), 1952.

2 Simultaneously with the expeditions of Sapri, the Mazzinists attempted an insurrectionary movement at Genoa and Leghorn; these attempts, however, ended in failure.

3 It should be noted among other things, that many Italian politicians (including Mazzini) found asylum in Britain.

4 See Carlo Cattaneo's essay in *Alcuni scritti*, vol. II, Milan (Borroni e Scotti), 1846.

5 It should be noted that in 1857, on the occasion of the Indian rebellion, Pirotta, a printer of Milan, wanted to publish a new edition of Cattaneo's work, *India antica e moderna*, and wanted the author to add a few lines on the recent vicissitudes in that country; but probably the publication was not possible. See Cattaneo, *Epistolario*, vol. III, p. 39, Florence (G. Barbara, 1954).

6 Fellice Orsini, *Lettere*, Rome (Vittoriano), 1936

7 Archives of the State of Florence, *Archivio segreto, Prefettura*, 1852-54, *transaction* 154, pt. I, file 8.

8 It is to be noted in this connection that in Piedmont on the initiative of official circles a subscription drive was launched "for the victims of the Indian rebellion," and that Victor Emmanuel II, Cavour and General Lamarmora contributed to it.

9 *Rivista Contemporanea*, Turin, July 1857.

10 For other attitudes of moderates in favour of the Indian rebellion, see also the *Gazzetta Piedmontese*, Turin, 1857, *passim*, and the *Gazzetta di Genova*, Genova, 1857, *passim*.

11 *Civilita Cattolica*, Rome, 27 June 1857.

12 *Italia del Popolo*, Genoa, was a continuation of another important Mazzinist daily *Italia e Popolo* (Italy and the people) which had ceased publication a few months before as a result of persecution by the Exchequer of Piedmont.

13 *Italia del Popolo*, July 8, 1857.

14 *Ibid*., 17-22 August, article entitled *"L'India e l'Europa."*

15 *Ibid.*, September 15, 1857, *"Lettere parigine. Della Cina e delle Indie."*

16 *La Ragione*, Turin, August 15, 1857.

Russian Press On 1857

P. SHASTIKO

THE FIRST REPORT of a popular uprising in India reached Russia on June 27, 1857, when Khreptovich, the Russian Ambassador in London, telegraphed the news to St Petersburg of the outbreak at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi by the insurgents. On the same day he wrote a memorandum to Prince Gorchakov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and appended extracts from the London papers. A detailed description of events was sent by Colonel Ignatiev, Russian Military Attache in London.

Ignatiev wrote: "The uprising in India is not a chance mutiny of several native regiments against the company; it is rather an expression of the desire of the region to free itself from a hateful foreign yoke." Ignatiev believed the reasons for the revolt lay in the "abuses of the administrative personnel and the devouring greed of the company." In Ignatiev's opinion, the policy of the company led to even the "feudal leaders of India" realising that "sooner or later every convenient piece of land within the reach of the English merchants will be seized by them."

When it appeared in the press, the sensational news from London roused Russian public opinion. "There is hardly a question more important, interesting or grave than that of India in the political world today. News from India is awaited with the greatest impatience; the most exciting headlines are 'India,' 'Indian Post' and 'Correspondence from Calcutta,'" declared the liberal magazine *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (Fatherland Notes). "Indian affairs

have become the most vital problem of the day. The eyes of all Europe have been fixed on India for five months," the magazine *Russia Vestnik* told its readers.

A furious polemic developed in the newspapers and magazines as to Russia's attitude to the revolt. The public found it hard to obtain a correct idea of the reasons for the revolt and how it was developing since the Russian press took most of its material on the subject from English newspapers. That circumstance explained the contradiction and confusion in the viewpoints not only of the different magazines and newspapers but even in the views of various writers.

The clearest and most definite opinion about the revolt was undoubtedly found only among the Russian revolutionary democrats. Their views were expressed in N. A. Dobrolyubov's article "An Opinion of the History and Contemporary State of the East India Company," which appeared in the September issue of the magazine *Sovremennik*. N. G. Chernyshevsky, the writer and philosopher, who headed the Russian revolutionary democratic movement, noted with satisfaction that "the article really turned out well."

Dobrolyubov's article was distinguished for its mature approach to the subject. It considered the revolt not as a chance outburst of dissatisfaction but as a "historically necessary affair." Dobrolyubov began his study of the reasons for the rebellion by investigating all the springs and levers of the East India Company's machinery of exploitation, combining, as it did, the insolence of the robber with the greed of the petty shopkeeper.

With complete objectivity Dobrolyubov traced the history of the establishment of British rule in India and the growth of a small company of enterprising merchants into an oligarchy of commercial tycoons. He flatly rejected the claim of historians and journalists who, through naivete or hypocrisy, talked of the "civilizing" mission of the Eng-

lish. "England's ultimate aim is state and private profit and not civilization," Dobrolyubov wrote.

In his estimate of the revolt Dobrolyubov took the side of those who did not regard it as religious revolt of "fanatical Hindus" or a "mutiny of soldiers who have gotten out of hand," but as the *emancipatory uprising of people* who had selflessly risen against invaders. He was able to understand that "....the people rebelled because they finally detected evil in the very organisation of the British rule."

At that time the official Russian view was presented by the newspaper *Russky Invalid*, which carried regular and thorough reports on the events in India. On October 13, 1857, the newspaper published a long article by Sergeberg entitled "East Indies Affairs." The author's sympathies were exclusively on the side of the insurgent Indians. "The British lion is accustomed to clawing up the political bodies of states. This time, as regards India, it may have to restrain its fierce habits." Sergeberg found the reason for the revolt, in the "English brutal treatment of the Indians (particularly when collecting taxes) and their absolute ignoring of human rights."

The highly popular newspaper *Peterburgskie Vedomosty*, edited by A. A. Kraesky, a member of the political group known as "Westerners," also kept its readers well-informed On July 30 the paper began to run a series called "Letters about East Indies Indignation" in which the author advised his readers to take a critical attitude towards the London papers inasmuch as "the English," he said, "possess the Roman art of hiding or denying failures." From the history of how British rule was established in India the author drew the conclusion that "the very structure of the Indo-British Empire contains in itself an embryo of death." He labelled as nonsense the claims of British journalists that the reason for the revolt lay in the officers having ignored the religious feelings of the Hindus.

As to those who claimed that "enlightened Europe' had a cultural mission in "stagnating, barbaric Asia," the

Peterburgskie Vedomosty called the thesis unscrupulous Pharisaism, arguing reasonably that "England acquired a vast empire in order not to civilize it but to devour it."

The reason for Russian authors devoting so much attention to Europe's "civilizing role" in Asia was that it was the argument used to justify the frank and undisguisedly cynical actions of the colonizers. Reactionary circles in Russia also tried to utilize that jesuitical weapon. The *Russky Vestnik* reflected the opinion of those circles when it said: "We do not sympathize with England's foreign policy; we have points of conflicts with her. But we shall always have the magnanimity and conscientiousness to recognise the unity of our tasks. Both England and Russia are called upon to spread the light of the European way of life in the moral darkness of stagnating Asia. Here we are allies; here there is solidarity between us."

However, justice requires us to note that the opinion of the *Russky Vestnik* did not receive any support from the Russian public. That is quite understandable. Besides sympathizing with the Indian people in their struggle for freedom and independence, the Russian people were themselves still smarting from the insult to their national pride inflicted by British and French arms in the Crimean War of 1854. Hence, their sympathies were on the side of those who strove to free India from the colonial yoke.

The grim echoes of the storm in Hindustan rolled over the snowy peaks of the Himalayas and across the plains of Russia until they reached St. Petersburg. The progressive section of the Russian public detected in that storm the power of the first spring squall, forerunner of the coming storms of emancipation.

Soviet scholars study the history of the Indian rebellion of 1857-1859 with great interest. That interest is based on an understanding of history not as an aggregate of subjective views but as a corollary of objective laws, a study of which makes it possible to understand the direction in which society is moving. The Indian people's heroic struggle in

the past, India's emergence as a great power in the present, and the prospects for her future development make a study of Indian history both fascinating and responsible.

According to the Soviet scholars, the Indian revolt is not an isolated incident. The revolt in India, the Taiping rebellion in China, Babism in Iran, the rise of the emancipatory movement in Indonesia—all represented the reaction of the peoples to attempts to convert their countries into colonies.

The Indian revolt was directed against British rule, and peasants, artisans and sepoys were its chief motive force. But besides this force there was a feudal force headed by nobles whom the British deposed and who saw an opportunity to regain their lost rights and privileges. The chief weakness of the revolt obviously lay in its lack of organisation.

In spite of the fact that the revolt was put down it played an exceptionally important role in developing national consciousness in India and laid a firm foundation for joint action on the part of her anti-colonial forces, irrespective of religion, caste or language.

China And India In The Mid-19th Century

YU SHENG-WU
CHANG CHEN-KUN

I

The mid-19th century was a great epoch of general upsurge of national liberation movements in various Asian countries. Revolutions broke out, one after another. The Taiping revolution and the Second Opium War in China, the popular uprisings in India, the Babists' risings in Persia and the Anglo-Persian War, the peasant-uprising in Syria and Lebanon, the anti-colonial struggle of the people in Borneo, etc., formed a powerful torrent sweeping aside all the ugly forces of colonialism. In this surging tide of people's revolutions, the struggle of the Chinese and Indian peoples against foreign aggression and oppression were the most widespread. They had the most profound impact on the subsequent liberation movements of the Asian nations, and dealt the heaviest blow to the foreign capitalist aggressors and feudal forces. The struggles in India and in China were the two main currents in the national liberation movement in Asia.

The rise of the national liberation movements in Asia in the middle of the last century was in effect the direct outcome of the colonial policy of the western capitalist aggressors. By a combination of force and intrigue they plundered and enslaved the Asian peoples. They disrupted the prevalent economic structure of the Asian countries and forced

them into the world capitalist market as colonies or semi-colonies. Deprived of their traditional rights and subjected to increasing hunger and poverty, the Asian peoples were compelled to choose the correct and only road to freedom and independence—to wage resolute struggle against the foreign aggressors and shatter the fetters forcibly imposed upon them.

Thus, with the increasing expansion in Asia of the aggressive forces of Western capitalism, the anti-colonial struggle was brought up on the order of the day, and it inevitably became the great common task of the oppressed and enslaved Asian peoples. The common fate, interest, and goal of the struggle bound the Asian nations closely together and brought about the closest ties among the national liberation movements of Asia. While discussing the 1857-59 uprising in India, Marx pointed out that this nation-wide war for national emancipation "coincided with a general disaffection exhibited against English supremacy on the part of the great Asian nations, the revolt of the Bengal army being, beyond doubt, intimately connected with the Persian and Chinese wars."[1]

The Anglo-Persian War provided a favourable condition for the great Indian uprising by tying down British troops. The Second Opium War waged by the Chinese people against British and French aggression and the Indian uprising—both had in fact the effect of acting as a check on the enemy to the benefit of each other. The success or failure of the struggle for national liberation of any Asian country exercised a far-reaching influence on the national liberation movement of the others. This close inter-connection existed although its significance was not fully recognised by the Asian peoples at the time

II

The Second Opium War which Britain and France launched against China in 1856-60 was a war of plunder prosecuted by the Western capitalist robbers to enlarge

their stranglehold on China. The resistance put up by the Chinese people against foreign aggression was turned into a just national war. In essence this was, in many respects, the recurrence and continuation of the First Opium War at the beginning of the 'forties But in the context of the world situation obtaining at that time one ought to make a clear distinction between these two wars. During the First Opium War, the Chinese people did not receive any foreign aid, direct or indirect; but during the Second Opium War, they had, in their hour of trial, a friend and brother in the Indian people who were heroically struggling (in the years 1857-59) to overthrow the British colonial rule. Despite the fact that conditions at that time set limitations to establishing direct ties beween them as today, the Indian and the Chinese peoples were in fact mutually influenced and assisted by each other in their war against the common enemy.

The Second Opium War broke out when the British aggressors who were sheltering smugglers' ships cold-bloodedly massacred a large number of peaceful residents of Canton. The pirates, the self-styled "civilized people," backed by "gunboats and artillery," drove blusteringly up the Pearl River and pressed on to Canton. From October 27, 1856, they bombarded the peaceful city continuously; their marine corps broke into the city and committed untold atrocities—raping, kidnapping, killing and setting fire to houses and properties they could lay their hands on. The invaders thought that had they shown their teeth the Chinese would be frightened and bullied into submission. But they were mistaken. The people resolutely resisted the aggressors' offensive The British warships that had intruded into the Pearl River failed in their show of force, and, under the powerful counter-blows of the defenders, were soon forced to beat a hasty retreat from the neighbourhood of Canton.

To extricate themselves from the predicament in which they now found themselves and to extend the war, the dis-

comfited aggressors thought of dispatching troops from India. On January 10, 1857, J. Bowring, British Minister to China, addressed from Hongkong an official letter to Canning, British Governor-General of India, asking that "if possible, troops of Her Majesty to the amount of five thousand men accompanied by a limited body of artillery, may be dispatched without delay from India to this Colony, for service in China."[2] M. Seymour, commander of the British Far Eastern Fleet, put in the same request to Canning.

But the aggressors again miscalculated. India in 1857 could provide no facilities for the British aggressive war against China. Britain's ruthless colonial policy in India had kindled the flames of hatred; the Indian people could no longer tolerate oppression and enslavement. Growing anti-British feelings were prevalent even among the Indian "native soldiers" who had been trained by the British themselves. The awakened Indian soldiers successively staged a number of small-scale anti-British revolts in the spring of 1857. These were the storm signals of the coming revolutionary upheaval. In such circumstances, the position of the British authorities in India was no better than that of the invaders in China. It was an idle dream to release troops from India for an offensive against China. Bowring's appeal to Canning for help was, like a stone thrown into the sea, buried for ever in the archives.

Thus, as early as the beginning of the Second Opium War, the Chinese people had begun, in effect, to receive support from their Indian brothers. In their individual struggles against aggression and for freedom and independence, the two peoples began to help and to cooperate with each other and together they held the enemy at bay.

In March, 1857, the British government decided to dispatch reinforcements from Britain itself and from Mauritius. Lord Elgin, a past master in colonial rule and later Governor-General of India (which post he occupied over a long period), was appointed special envoy to China charged with the mission of armed blackmail on a large scale. But,

to the mortification of the colonialists, this new aggressive scheme was baulked to a considerable extent by the Indian people. On May 10, as the British "expeditionary forces" moved eastwards the valiant Indian people gave the signal for the great uprising against the British. Delhi was quickly occupied. The colonial regime faced the unprecedented danger of being overthrown. Not very long before, Bowring had appealed to Canning for help; now it was the turn of the latter to ask Elgin for help. While on the way to China via Singapore, Elgin received on June 3, 1857, a dispatch from Canning which gave an account of the widespread rising in India and the critical position of the British. Canning said:

"In the valley of the Ganges, between Calcutta and Agra, for a length of 750 miles, there are barely 1,000 European soldiers; whilst there are several towns and stations of importance, containing forts, magazines, treasuries, and large civil communities of Europeans, which are held by native troops alone. If mutinous rebellion raises its head at any of these spots, the Government of India is literally without any force wherewith to put it down. The mutineers would carry everything before them, and we now know how they use the opportunity. The flame would spread like wild fire, and would rage uncontrolled. Every day during which Delhi remains in the hands of the rebels, is an encouragement to a rising elsewhere. This state of things is full of danger. I know that the native regiments in some of the most important of the stations to which I have referred, are disaffected." [8]

To mend this critical situation, Canning asked Elgin to divert his troops at once to Calcutta to prop up the tottering British order in Bengal. A bluebook has recorded that while Elgin was impatient to fulfil his mission in China, he had to satisfy Canning's request. Thus was the British "expeditionary force" to China stopped half-way by the heroic Indian people.

The resolute action for freedom and independence of

the Indian people had again fitted into the Chinese war of resistance to aggression. According to instructions issued by Clarendon, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, on April 20, 1857, Elgin was to have led his "expeditionary force" to the north as soon as he reached China and to force the Manchu government at the point of the bayonet to sign new unequal treaties. But, owing to the Indian risings, this aggressive mission was not carried out till a year later.

The Indian risings had held back reinforcements for the aggressive forces in China. This is only one aspect of the matter. On the other side, the Chinese people's war against aggression had the effect of responding to the action of the Indian people and helping to check the enemy. After the Indian risings had broken out, the British attempted to muster their entire force in the Far East to first suppress the Indian people before coping with China. But the uncompromising struggle of the Chinese people thwarted their scheme. Although Elgin did dispatch a portion of the China-bound British expeditionary force to India, the Chinese people still pinned down a fair number of British naval and land forces. To protect their pirate interests, the aggressors were obliged to keep these forces in China.

In June 1857, the flames of the Indian uprisings had spread from Meerut and Delhi to many other places in the Valley of the Ganges. Even in Calcutta trouble was brewing. The British rulers were frightened out of their wits. Again and again Canning urged Elgin (who had arrived at Hongkong) to send more military aid. In spite of the former's repeated appeals for help, Elgin, himself in difficulties, could hardly spare a single soldier from the Chinese area. This is what he reported to Clarendon on July 29 of the same year:

"On examining the resources at my disposal, with a view of responding, to the utmost of my ability, to Lord Canning's appeal, I came to the conclusion that, on the one hand, it would be idle to attempt to send to India any portion of the feeble garrison stationed at Hongkong; that, on

the other, there would be considerable risk in materially diminishing our naval force, as on it we depended for the protection of our countrymen established at the different Treaty ports, and for the maintenance of our communication with Canton." [4]

The final outcome of the matter was that Elgin adopted the strange method of giving Canning "moral support." He went alone to Calcutta. He explained that this would have a stimulating effect on British soldiers because his appearance would be taken "as the earnest of large reinforcements from China." [5] The joint blows of the Chinese and Indian peoples must have reduced the British aggressors to an awkward and precarious position!

The Chinese people had profound sympathy for their fighting Indian brothers and were inspired by their victories. But this feeing of sympathy for the Indian cause could not find an effective outlet as China did not have her own newspapers at that time, and the written records that have come down to her were limited in number too. However, it is not difficult to see even from the fragmentary writings left by the ruling class, what the attitude of the Chinese people towards the Indian uprising was. In an article entitled "Notes on the Capture of Yeh Ming shen by the British in Canton," Hsueh Fu-cheng, a diplomat, said: "The people of Canton hate the British. Rumours had it that the British dependency, India, has risen in revolt, that the British soldiers have suffered defeat and have lost several commanders...." This gives a hint of how the people of Kwangtung province must have busily exchanged news of the Indian rising. A book, *An Account of Contact with Foreigners*, written by Hua Ting-chieh, a magistrate of Nanhai County, Kwangtung province, describing his personal experience, tells in greater detail of how the people of Kwangtung welcomed the Indian rising. "At that time some people from Hongkong said that the British were in such financial straits that they not only delayed paying the troops but were hard put to it in meeting their daily expenses; they were in sore

need of trade with China. Others said they had got wind that the British dependency of Bengal had revolted and that the British troops had been defeated. A month or two later, it was again rumoured that the British troops had fallen into an ambush and had been completely annihilated. A commander, some said an imperial son-in-law, had perished, and the other generals were so alarmed that they were at a loss as to what to do. These tidings were carried from lip to lip and everybody said the same thing. Asked of the actual situation, governor-general Yeh Ming-shen said he had had similar reports from various quarters. Incidentally, letters from merchants in Hongkong had about the same to tell. The people were overjoyed." [6]

Though this account of the happenings in India may not prove to be entirely correct (this was unavoidable at the time), it nevertheless shows the deep concern of the people of Kwangtung for the uprising and their desire that their Indian brothers should achieve success. Kwangtung province was at that time in the forefront of the war against aggression; it was comparatively near to India, and Hongkong lay in its immediate neighbourhood. It was natural, therefore, that the people of Kwangtung should be the first to hear of the Indian events and to respond to it.

The ordinary Chinese were not the only people who followed developments in the Indian rising with deep interest. Yeh Ming shen, then concurrently the governor-general of Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces, and the commander of war against the British invaders in Kwangtung province, paid close attention to the struggle of the Indian people. In memorials to the emperor he repeatedly referred to the success of the Indian rising and concluded that the "fate of the foreigners is by no means better" and that it was the important reason why the British invaders could not then "send up reinforcements." [7] In the latter half of 1859, Chalafenta, a Tartar general of Ili (Sinkiang) and another Mandarin Fahfooli, acting on the proposal of the Russian consul in Sinkiang, formally suggested that a spe-

cial mission be sent to India to conclude an alliance against Britain—an excellent expedition, which, in their opinion, should lead to the triumph over the enemy. In a memorial to the emperor, Chalafenta and Fahfooli, citing the Russian consul, said:

"Both Britain and France are now regrouping their troops and repairing their men-of-war, making ready to march their combined forces in February or March next year against Tientsin again with a vindictive purpose. The best policy at the moment is to steal their thunder. Now India is a fertile land and an important post among the British dependencies. Though it is garrisoned by British soldiers, the people there cherish a deep hatred for the British and an uprising has long been brewing. We have a chance there.... If it is posible to send an able man secretly to India and there extract from the Indians a promise to respond from within, then the British will not be able to withstand them and... this will make the British fear there might be internal trouble, then perhaps the danger of war to China will be eliminated." [8]

In another memorial, Chalafenta and Fahfooli again stressed that what the Russian consul had said was "all true," and that his proposal was "not altogether unworkable." [9] They asked the emperor to adopt it. Though the realization of such a proposal was out of the question owing to the limitations of the time, it is nevertheless noteworthy that the idea of entering into an alliance with India for a joint resistance against aggression did exist in China a hundred years ago.

III

Although the Indian people's uprising was cruelly suppressed by the British colonialists, and the Second Opium War ended in defeat for China, the struggles for national liberation of these two countries continued unabated. It was also at this time that valiant deeds of far-seeing and heroic

Indians who took part in the Chinese people's revolution came to be known.

Of course, contact between the Chinese and Indian peoples was unpalatable to the British aggressors, who desired that the two big Asian nations hate, fight and kill each other, so that their struggle against colonialism might be weakened, diverted from its true course and finally collapse. As early as 1857 when the fires of the Indian uprising were burning furiously, a correspondent of the *Times* had demanded that "untrustworthy" Indian soldiers be sent to fight the Chinese. He said: "Many people think that there could be no difficulty in carrying on our corrective measures in India and our war with China at the same time There are, doubtless, sepoy regiments which, although not openly in revolt, are not trustworthy in action against their co-religionists. Why not send them to China?"[10] Actually, in the latter stages of the Second Opium War, the British authorities did send a number of Indian soldiers to China.

After the Indian uprising was completely put down, the British began to work hand in glove with the Manchu rulers, and sent Indian soldiers as cannon fodder to help the latter suppress the Chinese revolutionaries.

The British hit upon the sinister idea of pitting Asians against Asians. But events did not fully turn out as they had wished. When they were throwing hundreds of Indian soldiers into the battle-field against the Taipings, a number of awakened Indians joined the revolutionaries and became their friends; they turned their guns against all foreign interventionist troops, British troops included. It wrote a glorious page in the history of Sino-Indian relations, and was the beginning of direct cooperation between the Chinese and Indian peoples in their fight against colonialism.

As far as we know from available materials, the appearance of Indians in the ranks of the Taipings was first mentioned in a letter by Tseng Kuo-fan, the sworn enemy of the Taipings. In a reply to Hu Lin I, another general, he wrote: "I have heard that in laying siege to Yushan county

town the rebel loyal 'Prince' Li Hsiu-cheng had a number of dark-skinned foreigners among his ranks."[11]

What Tseng is referring to here is the encirclement of Yushan, county town in Kiangsi province, by the Taiping forces under the command of the noted leader Li Hsiu-cheng at the beginning of 1861. The "dark-skinned foreigners" must have been Indians, because the Manchu rulers generally called Indian soldiers "dark-skinned soldiers of Tien Chu (India)."

The circumstances in which the Indians came to serve under Li Hsiu-cheng's command are obscure, but we know for certain that in August 1860, when Li marched his troops against Shanghai, the British invaders openly intervened and ordered Indian troops to fight against the Taipings.[12] Not long afterwards, Li's troops penetrated into Kiangsi. It is highly probable that the Indians who were among them came from the British garrison at Shanghai.

That Indians served with the Taipings not long after the British authorities began to participate directly in the suppression of the Taipings is a fact which merits careful attention. It shows that certain far-seeing Indians sympathised with the cause of China's national liberation and directly joined in the struggle against aggression. They took a stand opposite to that of the British interventionists. They laid the groundwork for building the edifice of direct co-operation between the Chinese and Indian peoples against colonialism; their great contribution will never be forgotten.

Not long afterwards, more Indian soldiers were forced by the British into service to intensify the massacre of the revolutionaries of the Taiping movement.[13] It was a sad thing indeed. However, during the most bitter years of the struggle between the Taipings and the interventionists (1862-63), an increasing number of awakened Indians went over to the revolutionaries even on the battle-fields where the fiercest battles were fought (in various areas in Kiangsu and Chekiang provinces). The following are a few recorded instances:

In a battle in Shaohsing, Chekiang province, on February 19, 1863, the Indians serving with the Taipings helped to eliminate a French officer, Tardif de Moidrey, who assisted the Manchus. According to Manchu government documents, the combined forces of the Manchus and the foreigners that day "bombarded Shaohsing from outside the Hsi Kuo Gate, demolishing the city wall to the height of more than 100 feet and killing a countless number of 'bandits.' Tardif was standing alone on the bridge, urging his troops to mount the city wall. The rebels armed with firelocks and stones manned the breaches. The fifty or sixty dark-skinned foreigners in support of the rebels fired point-blank at Tardif who was hit in the head and died."[14]

On May 2 of the same year, during an encounter in Taitsang county, Kiangsu province, "three sepoys, formerly of the 5th Bombay Native Infantry, all of whom were fighting with the Taipings" lost their lives.[15]

On October 7, the same year, in a battle in Shihlichangchech between Hanchow and Yuhang in Chekiang province, the Manchu-French combined force claimed to "have killed a number of 'bandits' and a dark-skinned foreigner among them."[16]

More accounts about the presence of "dark-skinned foreigners" among the Taipings can be found.[17]

The Taiping forces in the three examples mentioned above were all under the command of Li Hsiu-cheng who was the most consistent and energetic of the commanders in the revolutionary camp in opposition to the foreign interventionists. It is, therefore, quite understandable that, in the continuous fights with foreign troops, some Indian soldiers were drawn into his forces.

How then was it possible for Indian soldiers who were under the pressure and strict control of the British military authorities in China to go over to the Taipings? According to available data, it can be confirmed that captured Indians who laid down their arms on the battle-field were among those who joined the revolutionaries. In a letter dated

September 17, 1862, to the British Minister in China, the British Consul in Shanghai said: "A Belgian adventurer came in a day or two ago from Soochow.... He also says that he saw two Europeans in the city who spoke of having done a paying business in arms and ammunition, and they told him too that four of the sepoys who were made prisoners at the capture of the field piece in May last, are now alive and at Soochow."[18]

There must have been other Indian soldiers, who, like these four, once captured, gradually became enlightened through their observation and experience of practical life, and voluntarily put themselves at the service of the Chinese revolutionaries.

A smaller number of Indians joined the Taipings in a different way. An Englishman, Augustus Lindley, has told in a book of how he and an "Indian comrade" went from Shanghai to Soochow in October 1863 to join the Taipings.[19] Obviously, this "Indian comrade" was a volunteer who supported the Taiping movement. The book also mentions a "British East Indian subject" who intended to join the Taipings in Fukien province in the company of H. A. Burgevine and others.[20]

The Indians who voluntarily joined the Taipings were fine representatives of their people who a hundred years ago blazed the trail for the joint resistance of the Chinese and Indian peoples against foreign invasion. They cherished a profound sympathy for the Chinese revolutionaries. It was a sympathy which grew out of their personal experience, and they seized the first chance to join the Chinese revolutionaries against the foreign oppressors. As for those Indian soldiers who began to understand and to support the Taiping movement only after being captured, they must have necessarily gone through a process of a change of ideas. Of this Lindley has left us an important clue. He wrote: "The true reason why those engaged in assisting the Taipings preferred that course, with all its troubles and dangers, is that, having once met the revolutionists, the

immense superiority of the latter to the Manchus had enlisted their sympathies and active support."[21]

Lindley is referring to European sympathisers. But if this was true of Europeans, then how much more so it was of the Indian soldiers since they were traditionally imbued with a tremendous passion for truth and freedom and since their motherland and brethren were being trampled upon by foreign invaders. Once they had shaken off the British military bondage and had become enlightened by the practical action of the Chinese revolutionaries, thus raising their consciousness, they became fighters for freedom against the common foe. Their support for the Chinese people's national liberation movement, therefore, not only shines in the history of the friendly relations between the two peoples, but gave their own lives a new meaning. This is an example which explains the truth that it is only when the oppressed peoples join hands that they can find the best way out for the nation and for themselves.

In fighting alongside the Chinese revolutionaries, the Indian allies of the Taipings manifested a hatred commonly shared by the Chinese and Indian peoples towards the foreign oppressors. They embodied the common interests of the two peoples who were striving for national emancipation. They are rightly the direct successors of the heroes of the 1857 rising, the inheritors of their unfinished cause and of their immortal spirit. Many of them gave their lives for the revolutionary cause of the Chinese people.

However, we must point out here that the cooperation between the great peoples of India and China at that time was not yet a general, full-fledged one; it was but of a nascent character. It was so because the British aggressors who then ruled India with an iron hand forced the Indians to fight for their interests in China, and thus it hampered more friendly contacts and mutual understanding to be established between the Indian and Chinese peoples. The Indian soldiers sent to China were, of course, but victims to the

British aggressive policies, who could hardly escape the lot of being ordered about and enslaved by the British military authorities. It was again British colonialism to blame.

Now history has pronounced its verdict and the situation has changed entirely. What the colonialists could lord over and scheme unchallenged a hundred years ago could hardly happen today. Free and united, the peoples of India and China are now powerful factors in the struggle against colonialism. The basis for direct and extensive cooperation between our two peoples has been laid, and the imperialist attempt at alienating our peoples shall come to nought. When we think of the martyrs who died in the common struggle against aggression, our hearts are filled with pride and gratitude.

NOTES

1 *India Today*, "Marx on Revolt of 1857," vol. II, no. 3 p. 23
2 *The Second China War*, 1856-1860, ed. by D. Bonner-Smith and E. Lumby, p. 162.
3 Bluebook: Correspondence Relative to the Ear. of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan, 1857-1859, p. 8.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
6 Hua Ting-chieh (Chin Ko Chu Jen), *An Account of Contact with Foreigners*, vol. II, from the "Data for Modern History," ed. by the Historical Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, no. 2, 1956, p. 108.
7 *A Complete Account of the Transaction of Foreign Affairs*, in the reign of Hsien Feng of the Manchu dynasty, vol. XV, p. 6.
8 *Ibid.*, vol. XLVII, p. 17.
9 *Ibid.*, vol. XLVII, p. 18.
10 G. W. Cooke, *China*, p. 73.
11 Correspondence of Tseng Kuo-fan p. 66, from the *Complete Works of Tseng Kuo-fan*, vol. III, published by the World Book Company.
12 L. Brine, *The Taeping Rebellion in China*, pp 254-55.
13 Operations of the 5th Bombay N. I. and the 22nd Punjab N. I. around Shanghai came under the direction of the British authorities after 1862.

14 *Memorials of Li Hung-chang*, vol. III, pp. 5-6. In the same encounter, the British officer, Tinling, who fought for the Manchus was fatally wounded. His death caused unrest among the British. See vol. II, pp. 587-88, Lindley's (Lin-Le) *Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh, the History of the Ti-ping Revolution*. The wirds "bandit" and "rebel" in the quotations are contemptuous terms used by the Manchu court to vilify the Taipings.
15 A. Wilson, *The Ever-Victorious Army*, p. 152.
16 *Memorials of Tso Tsung-tang*, vol. XI, part I, p. 5.
17 *Hsiao Tsang Sang Chi* (Notes on Shifting Scenes) by Yu Yao-chi records that on November 8, 1863, "one of the foreign officers captured outside the city two foreigners, one white and one black-skinned, together with three interpreters of the Taipings, and had handed them over to the Louhsien County authorities." See *Tai Ping Tien Kuo*, vol. VI, p. 526, ed. by the Chinese Historical Society.
18 S. O. 228|329 Letter of W. H. Medhurst to F. Bruce, September 17, 1862.
19 Augustus Lindley, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 632-36.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 600.
21 *Ibid.*, pp. 476-77.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1857

May 9	Court-martialling of 85 sepoys of a regiment at Meerut for refusing to touch greased cartridges, sepoys sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment.
10	Three regiments at Meerut revolt; after freeing the imprisoned sepoys they march to Delhi.
11	Delhi captured by sepoys; and Bahadur Shah proclaimed Emperor.
13-31	Rising spreads to Ferozepur, Muzaffarnagar, Aligarh, Naushera, Etawah, Mainpuri, Roorkee, Etah, Nasirabad, Mathura, Lucknow, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur.
June 1-5	Risings in Moradabad, Badaun, Azamgarh, Sitapur, Neemuch, Banaras, Kanpur and Jhansi.
6	Nana Sahib lays siege to Kanpur.
7-8	Jhansi fort captured, Rani Lakshmi Bai restored to power, Battle of Badli Sarai and occupation of the Ridge near Delhi by British.
9-13	Risings in Dariabad, Fatehpur, Nowgong, Gwalior and Fatehgarh.
26-27	Kanpur falls to Nana Sahib.
July 1	Rising in Hathras and Indore. Siege of Lucknow Residency by the rebels.
12	Defeat of Nana Sahib's troops under Jwala Prasad and Tikka Singh at Fatehgarh.
16	Battle of Kanpur and retreat of Nana Sahib's forces to Bithur.

27	Capture of Arrah by Kunwar Singh.
August 3	Relief of Arrah by British.
13	Defeat of Kunwar Singh at Jagdishpur.
16	Tatiya Tope defeated at Bithur.
September 17	Sir Colin Campbell assumes chief command of the army.
14	Kashmiri Gate at Delhi blown up by British.
19	Lahori Gate bastion at Delhi secured by British.
20	Recapture of Delhi by British.
21	Bahadur Shah surrenders to the British at Humayun's tomb.
22	Arrest and murder of Bahadur Shah's sons by Major Hodson.
October 23	British retake Lucknow after breaking through Sikandar Bagh.
26	Tatiya Tope defeated on the banks of Pandu.
27	Tatiya Tope dislodges the British from Kanpur and captures it.
December 6	Tatiya Tope, dislodged by Campbell from Kanpur, joins Lakshmi Bai.
9	Battle of Kalpi, retreat of Tatiya Tope.
1858	
March 5	Mehndi Hussain and the Rajas of Gonda and Chardah attacks British camp at Chanda.
21	Lucknow brought under complete control by the British.
22	Kunwar Singh captures Azamgarh.
April 1	Tatiya Tope, arriving with 22,000 men to aid Lakshmi Bai, is defeated by the British on the banks of the Betwa.
3-5	Storming of Jhansi by British; Jhansi fort falls; and Lakshmi Bai flees; Kunwar Singh defeats British at Azamgarh a second time.

23	Kunwar Singh scores yet another victory against the British at Jagdishpur.
26	Death of Kunwar Singh.
May 6	Capture of Bareilly by British from Bahadur Khan.
11	British lay siege to Shahjahanpur defended by Maulavi Ahmadullah Shah.
22	Second battle of Kalpi. Lakshmi Bai, Nawab of Banda and Rao Sahib (nephew of Nana Sahib) lead the rebels.
24	Kalpi falls to the British.
June 1	Rani Lakshmi Bai, Rao Sahib and Nawab of Banda defeat Scindia of Gwalior; capture and proclaim Nana Sahib as Peshwa.
17	British lay siege to Gwalior; Rani of Jhansi killed in action at Gwalior; Tatiya Tope flees.
20	British recapture Gwalior.
August 2	Transfer of East India Company to Crown.
14	Battle of Kotra (Udaipur) and defeat of Tatiya Tope.
October 17-19	British lay siege to Jagdishpur defended by Amar Singh, brother of Kunwar Singh; Amar Singh defeated at Nenadi.
1859	
January 21	Battle of Sikhar, defeat of Tatiya Tope.
April 7	Tatiya Tope betrayed by Raja Man Singh and made prisoner.
18	Tatiya Tope hanged.
October to December	Final operations against rebels in Northern Oudh and Nepal, and capture on December of 4,000 of Nana Sahib's followers.